

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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DOUBLEDAY'S CHILDREN.

BY DUTTON COOK,

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG MR. NIGHTINGALE," "HOBSON'S CHOICE," &c. &c.

BOOK II. THE CONFESSION OF DORIS.
CHAPTER II. "BEGGARS CANNOT BE CHOOSERS."

OF course, in comparison with the squalor of Ossulton-street the house in Powis-place was handsomely—even luxuriously—appointed and provided for. In the first place, it was scrupulously clean; the duster and the scrubbing-brush were quite objects of veneration and devotion to Miss Leveridge. New paint the house had not known for long years, but the greatest pains were taken to make the old paint look as clean and bright as possible; in places, indeed, it had been rubbed away altogether, owing to an excessive desire to exhibit it to the best advantage. The patterns had been almost swept from the carpets with the dust; the colour lingered about the hangings only after a faint and ghostly fashion. The furniture was of an old-world, rectangular pattern, much adorned with small tickets, and tablets, and knobs of brass. An atmosphere of faded gentility seemed to possess the house. It smelt of the past; and the windows were rarely opened, for fear of an invasion of "blacks." In every room were to be found, stored in various old china bowls and vases, collections of dried rose-leaves of untold age, highly spiced—floral mummies and embalmed blossoms, whose fragrance had now something unnatural about it, suggestive less of the garden than of the chemist's shop, or the fumigated sepulchre.

Mr. Leveridge usually appeared in the evening, when tea, which was rather a

solemn and formal meal with us, was forthwith served.

"Well, my dear Deborah——"

"Well, my dear Dick——"

And then he kissed her affectionately, his rubicund, Punch-like visage glowing warmly by contrast with her white-rabbit face.

The servant then entered with the urn—a tall vessel of funereal or monumental pattern, that should rather have contained ashes than hot water. The teapot was of china, richly patterned with rose-buds, vine-leaves, and golden festoons and flourishes, a little basket, supposed to be a filter, swinging from the spout. The table was well supplied with muffins, hot cakes and toast, jam and preserves.

I was always glad when Mr. Leveridge came. He emptied many cups and consumed several muffins; he always seemed to enjoy himself and to impart to us some measure of his enjoyment. For we were very dreary in his absence; we were both apt to fall into a kind of lethargic slough, from which neither would stir to extricate the other. We interchanged few words, and those only of the most commonplace, poverty-stricken sort. In truth, sympathetic relations could hardly be established between us. Miss Leveridge could not be expected to care much about me—it would be something, indeed, if she could persuade herself to be indifferent in regard to me. And, in my turn, could I be supposed to care about Miss Leveridge? I owed her no gratitude, except indirectly, in that she was Mr. Leveridge's sister—charged by him to regard my interest and promote my welfare.

But Mr. Leveridge talked. He made an effort to enliven and amuse us; he brought,

as it were, a breath of fresh air into the house—news from without, and evidence of there being other people in the world beside ourselves. Women gain greatly, I think, by the society of men. This was not, perhaps, Miss Leveridge's opinion. She made exception, of course, in favour of "poor Dick;" but, otherwise, she entertained a contempt for the opposite sex, generally speaking of them with some bitterness of derision as mere "he-creatures." But "contempt" is, perhaps, too strong a term to apply to the sentiments of so weak a lady. She turned from men less with scorn than with dread. There was something strange and coarse, violent and aggressive about them, which greatly offended her small, timid, tremulous nature. Even "poor Dick" alarmed her. Upon his every sudden movement she winced, on account of her best china tea-service. She was forever persuading herself that he was on the eve of knocking down something, of disordering her household, or wreaking injury upon her furniture and property. She always seemed in alarm lest he should do or say something shocking. She loved him, I suppose, after her manner—he was her brother, her only surviving relation, and for long years they had been much together. But timidity must largely have leavened her love, just as lack of intelligence hindered her appreciation of him. Altogether, poor Miss Leveridge had her trials and troubles, for all her endeavours to isolate herself from the world. She was vainly endeavouring to reconcile her narrow fancies and small prejudices with the broad facts of life. Her brother's paintings were to her odious; yet she had to endure the thought that they were the source of livelihood both to Dick and herself; that they brought to him, indeed, both money and fame, and to her all the necessaries and small comforts of her existence in Powis-place.

Of his pictures Mr. Leveridge was careful to say little, therefore. "Poor Deborah does not care for them, does not like to have them mentioned," he would explain to me in a low tone. "She has quaint, prim, old-fashioned notions. She can't put them away from her now. Why should she? They do harm to no one. Bless you, I don't mind them. Poor Deborah! It's unlucky, perhaps, that she should be the sister of a painter of my style of art. But it can't be helped. She was brought up to think as she does.

Nature to her means shoes and stockings, and broad cloth, and Irish linen, and so forth. She doesn't like to think even of Adam and Eve before the Fall. She prefers the notion of our first parents after they had taken to clothing. She's a religious woman, too, poor dear Deborah; goes regularly to chapel every Sunday, with her hymn-book under her arm. Don't say anything about the pictures when she's by."

But assuredly it cramped Mr. Leveridge to be restrained from speaking of his pictures; for his art one could see was ever present with him. He was nothing if not a painter. He always seemed meditating how this or that might best be represented upon canvas. Men and women were to him all models, the great globe itself was "an object," to be studied and reproduced with the proper pigments and adroit exercise of his brush. I am sure he would have enjoyed the art-talk in which artists usually find so much delight—the discussion of his achievements, and his projects for the future; the proceedings of his competitors; the general progress of painting and painters. His left thumb seemed to be constantly projected ready for his palette; his hand was constantly carved to sustain a pencil. Mechanically he drew outlines and designs upon the tablecloth with his teaspoon. But he held his peace about his pictures, because "poor dear Deborah," his sister, cared not for such things, and he viewed it as his duty to humour her, and gratify her in every possible way, and at any sacrifice.

Thus his conversation was fettered and confined. He talked on a few small topics, such as Deborah understood and approved: the weather, housekeeping troubles, the state of his birds upon the roof of his studio, and other trivial and indifferent matters. It was better than nothing, perhaps; but it was not very exhilarating, and it did not enable Mr. Leveridge to do himself justice. He was, without doubt, a distinguished painter; it was hard that he should be compelled to suppress that fact, or to thrust it into the background.

How dull my life was in Powis-place I can hardly express. Day and night I was busying myself with thinking how to change my method of existence. Often I wished myself back with my aunts in Bath. But, as I knew, that was not practicable. I had sundered all ties between us. I had rendered return impossible. I was chargeable with ingrati-

tude, no doubt, in that I had left them so precipitately, made them, as people said, so poor a return for all their kindness to me. Had they truly been kind? Was I really ungrateful? I was met with that accusation at every turn. Does a helpless child really owe so much to those who help it in its helplessness? My aunts fed and clothed me. I was their plaything, a doll they found pleasure in dressing and undressing, in constraining now into this position, now into that. What could I do but let them proceed as they listed until the thing became past bearing, and I left them to come to London? As to the future, I knew not which way to turn for comfort. It was in vain to speak to my brother Nicholas. "Beggars cannot be choosers," he would say to me; or he would be ready with some other sound and sensible heart-breaking scrap of good advice, until good advice seemed something hateful, to be avoided at all costs. Nor could I extract much more comfort from Basil. He was kindly and sympathetic, but he was without energy. He could only counsel patience and endurance, in the hope of things changing for the better. Well, I was waiting, I had been waiting, in the hope of change, until I grew sick with waiting, and still no change came.

I kept as much apart from Miss Leveridge as I could. I remained upstairs in my own chamber, or I took refuge in the parlour, when she had snugly ensconced herself in the drawing-room. Her presence irritated me. I was vexed with her dull harmlessness, her timid surprised airs. For some time I took pleasure in startling her by brusque reckless utterances upon all sorts of subjects. But I grew weary of seeing her shrink and shiver, of hearing her weak treble, "My dear! how can you!" in a tone of tremulous expostulation. I knew the sort of life she would have had me lead. Had she possessed any influence in the matter I should have been a prim Sunday-school girl, smelling of yellow soap, carrying my prayer-book neatly wrapped in my clean pocket-handkerchief, bobbing curtsies when people spoke to me, and blushing crimson if they stared too hard; very clever at darning stockings and mending my clothes; meek, and sweet, and docile, and obedient, and most thoroughly objectionable. No, thank you, Miss Leveridge! I could not be that.

Yet how was I to escape from the method of life into which circumstances, and the good intentions and charity

of Mr. Leveridge, had forced me? On what side was I to look for change? Who would venture to break up the terrible monotony prevailing in Miss Leveridge's household? No stranger ever entered the house. A few friends and acquaintances she of course possessed; a spectacled clergyman, a bald doctor, and little groups of old women from "the square" as we called it—as though there were only one square in that dreary neighbourhood of dull squares—from Guilford and Doughty and Calthorpe-streets, and from Caroline and Lansdowne-places. Miss Leveridge's friends did not differ much from herself—they resembled her indeed far too closely. But these visitors did not increase my comfort or relieve my dullness. I had not patience to listen while they mumbled and prosed, twaddled and muttered. I fled whenever I heard them knock at the door, and locked myself in my own room.

My brothers I saw now and then, but not very often.

"How is it to end?" I asked Basil one day. "Am I to go on like this till I die?"

"Have you so very much to complain of?"

"I want change. I can't bear my life here. The monotony of it kills me."

"Change will come in time, no doubt, to you as to everyone else."

"You mean that I shall grow old and die?"

"There are smaller changes than age and death. But they will come, of course."

"You are a Job's comforter, Basil."

"What can I say? What can I do? You know how powerless I am in the matter, and how poor."

"We are all poor—poor as church-mice—and wretchedly dependent. But you won't even grumble about it."

"I'll grumble, Doris, if that will help to mend things. But I fear it will not."

"But isn't it hard to bear, Basil—very hard to bear?"

"Well—yes. I think so sometimes, and then I think how much worse it might easily have been."

"Not much, Basil."

"Don't say that, Doris. We found very kind friends. It is something to have such friends."

"I know, I know. We might have starved; we might have gone to the work-house; we might have been put to useful

trades; apprenticed to tinkers and tailors and candlestick-makers, like pauper children. Instead of that, we have a roof over our heads, and shoes and stockings to our feet, and blankets to wrap ourselves in at night, and food to put in our mouths, and so on, and so on. And yet, when all that's said——"

"You remain unhappy. Poor Doris! Well, let us hope this change you so desire may be nearer at hand than you imagine; and that, when the change comes, it may prove to have been worth wishing for—really a change for the better."

"You doubt that it will prove so?"

"I'm timid, perhaps. I like to make the best of the present—because I think I know the worst of it. But the future—there's no saying anything about that—what it will be like, what it will do. It may be good, it may be evil—no one can say. It is as a dark cloud—it may contain storm and fury, rack and ruin; or it may be but a flimsy screen, with an abundance of golden sunshine behind it."

"I wish I were as patient and philosophical as you, Basil."

He laughed and shook his head.

"I suppose we are all patient and philosophical up to a certain point—about the things that don't signify. But you, my sister, you are as the humble maiden in the fairy tales, you seem neglected and forgotten, and you think yourself forlorn and wretched; but cheer up, the beautiful prince, all silk and feathers, gold and silver, red slippers and laces, is surely coming in quest of you."

"But when will he be here? Soon?"

"Very soon—I shouldn't wonder. He may be just now coming round the corner."

"Oh Basil, how I wish he were!" And my heart beat loudly at the thought.

AT MOSCOW.

"ONCE again, face it! My lambs, my darlings, my doves, push on, if you love me! Ah no! this unsaintly snow-storm is more than ye can bear, pretty pigeons! Once again, horses of my heart! Blessed St. Isaac, mighty St. Michael! It's all in vain, English lord, and if your excellency were to have me knouted to death, I could not get the sledge up the avenue."

It was, luckily, within a short distance of the château whither I was bound, that the blinding snow-storm, the fiercest that I had ever known during a three years'

experience of Russia, had come on, and there before me rose up the gaunt gateposts, topped by iron spearheads yet bright with tarnished gold-leaf, which marked the limits of the baron's demesne. The wild wind was tossing about the dry snow like so much road-dust, and dashed in our faces not merely flakes of the fast-falling whiteness, but jagged lumps of ice that cut and bruised as never did sleet in England. It is not wonderful that the young, half-broken horses of the hired sledge that had brought me the three versts out of Moscow should have become unmanageable in their pain and terror, at the sudden outburst of the tempest.

"You are quite sure," said I, alighting and grasping my valise, "that this is the Château Olinsky?"

"I wish I were as sure of heaven," answered the lad promptly. "My father was dushtek, or soldier-servant, to my lord the baron, and I know the house as well as I know the Kremlin, noble sir!"

I paid the driver his due, and bidding him return and fetch me back to Moscow before sunset, should the storm abate, left him to speed citywards, and made my own way on foot among the drifts that already encumbered the ill-kept road, to the half-ruinous but imposing pile of the Olinsky château. Of the reception which I should meet there, armed as I was with a letter of introduction to the master of the house, I had very little doubt. Hospitality is liberally, even profusely, extended in Russia, and the long-established mercantile house whose errand I was engaged upon had been for a generation past on friendly terms with the Olinsky family.

The baron, a fine-looking old man, with a flowing white beard, and with several crosses and medals twinkling on the breast of his tightly-buttoned coat, gave me a cordial greeting.

"Any guest recommended by my esteemed correspondents, Irvine, Kirby, and Co., is welcome here, Mr. Vaughan," he said kindly. "I shall take it as a favour if you will make my poor house your home, during your stay in Moscow."

Nor was this a mere idle compliment, for the baron would not hear of my returning to my hotel in the town, but insisted that I should take up my quarters in a huge ghostly chamber, hung with faded tapestry, and adorned by portentous family portraits, but as warm as crackling logs and the heated air of the huge central stove could render it.

The family of Baron Olinsky, who was a widower, consisted only of a son, then travelling or residing in foreign countries, and one daughter, to whom I was presently introduced, and whose name was Irene. I had been accustomed to see beautiful faces in the luxurious society of St. Petersburg, but I acknowledged to myself that I had never beheld one so lovely as that of Mademoiselle Olinsky. She seemed quite free, too, from the haughty listlessness or exacting coquetry of the Muscovite belles whom I had hitherto encountered, and had much of the gentle simplicity of manner of an English girl. She talked—but that in Russia was a matter of course—French, English, and German, equally well, and knew and liked, as I found with surprise, my favourite authors.

A word as to myself. I, Arthur Vaughan by name, and related to Mr. Irvine, our principal, had almost completed my probation as clerk, and expected to be shortly received as a junior partner in the firm of Irvine, Kirby, and Co., in which my modest patrimony was invested. Ours was an old and influential house, well considered throughout the Baltic ports and the cities of Northern Russia, and my presence in Moscow was now due to the fact that overtures had been made to us to aid in the establishing of a new commercial bank, intended to afford greater facilities to improving landlords than the old Land Banks, cramped as to their capital, and bound by formal rules, could do. The proposal had been a tempting one, but before deciding upon it, my chiefs had resolved on asking the opinion of Baron Olinsky, on whose goodwill and shrewdness they could rely, and hence my mission.

One, two, and three days passed by. The weather was very bad, and the frequent and furious snow-storms kept those dwelling in the Château Olinsky very much within doors, yet I was far from finding the time hang heavily on my hands. The baron was constantly in his study; now conducting a voluminous correspondence, for he had been a diplomatist as well as a soldier, and was an honorary member of scientific societies in various lands; now conferring with his steward or farm-bailiff, and then giving audience to strange men, most of whom wore the caftan and eared cap of the peasant, while some were clearly from a distance, and spoke a dialect which the lazy, obsequious servants, who between them shuffled through the work of the country-

house, found it hard to understand. Consequently I was thrown much into the society of the beautiful Irene.

I fancied, more than once, not only that something weighed upon the mind of Mademoiselle Olinsky and clouded her naturally bright spirit, but that this something had reference to her father. I had noticed that her eye rested sometimes on the baron with an undefined expression of anxiety and regret; and there were times, too, when any unusual noise would cause her to start, and look apprehensively around. The baron, I am sure, was unconscious of this, for he never intermitted his pleasant flow of conversation. He would descant on every and any topic except the politics of the day, and these he put aside with a shrug and a smile.

It was the evening of the fourth day since I had been a visitor at the Château Olinsky. The baron had seemed absent and ill at ease during dinner, had risen early from table, and, excusing himself on the plea of having letters to write which would occupy him until a late hour, had bidden me good-night before I had finished my cigar. Mademoiselle Olinsky, too, had retired to her own apartments as soon as the coffee had been handed round, and I, tired of being the sole occupant of the great drawing-room, had gone up to my own room, and was in the act of stirring the smouldering wood-fire into a cheerful blaze, when there came a low, timid tap at my door. I opened it, and there, in the gaunt, darkling corridor, a silver lamp in her hand, stood Irene. One glance at her face told me that it was on no trifling errand that she had come.

"Hush! listen, but speak low in reply, for walls have ears," she said in English and in a hurried whisper. "There are traitors beneath this roof, who break our bread but to betray us! Have you noticed, Mr. Vaughan, a man named Vassili, a red-haired man, the house-steward, as you would call him in England?"

I had observed such a man; a quiet, deferential person, with a red beard and a remarkable resemblance to the Judas of tradition, and said so.

"He is a police spy!" said Mademoiselle Olinsky, with flashing eyes, "and he is not the only one; but my father will not be warned. You little know, you whose home-life has been free from such a taint, what an atmosphere of falsehood, deceit, and treachery we Russians are forced to breathe. But time is precious. You are

a friend, Mr. Vaughan, I am sure, and would help us?"

And she fixed her large dark eyes, wistfully, on my face.

"Be assured of that!" I answered, earnestly; "but what help is needed, or how can I, a stranger in the land, render it?"

"You can save my father," said Irene, eagerly, but in a low and cautious tone; "and you alone can do it, for to none other in the castle can I confide the truth. It is not," she hurriedly added, "that all our household is made up of spies and traitors. There are some of the servants who love my father well enough to risk prison and torture for his sake; but they are but simple, good-natured fellows, who could not elude the watch that by this time is set to intercept communication."

My look of wonder was, I suppose, expressive enough without the aid of words, for Mademoiselle Olinsky came a step nearer, and, low and earnestly, said, "You have heard of the Nihilists?"

I had heard—who has not?—the name of that terrible brotherhood, the bugbear of successive Czars, whose hidden influence is supposed to be devoted to the undermining of that throne which to a superficial observer appears so firm; and I assented by a motion of the head.

"He—the baron—is one of them," said Irene, hurriedly. "My father is only too good, too unselfish in his views, for the associates with whom he acts; but it is precisely of such as he—men of rank and property—that the Government desire to make a severe example. He is at this moment in the city, at one of their gatherings; and I have received notice that the authorities know all, and will this night make many arrests. Should he be taken—my father, I mean—he will receive the heaviest sentence that can be inflicted."

"And that is——?" asked I.

"Siberia——can you doubt it?" returned the girl impatiently, "and for life! You, and you alone, Mr. Vaughan, can save him; and even then, you must remember to ask him to return for my sake, not for his own, for he would deem it unworthy of him to abandon his friends in peril. I can give you the password that will admit you to the place where you will find him. I dare not order a carriage to be got ready, but you can ride, of course, as an Englishman. My horse stands ready saddled in the stable, and Ghiorgi Gregorovitch, the groom who brought the evil news, and who may be

trusted, will show you a path, shorter than the road, by which you may reach Moscow. I will not say how grateful I shall be."

"To serve you, to do your bidding, mademoiselle," I replied, and there was something in my tone that brought a dainty flush of pink into Irene's pale, beautiful face, "I would run more risk, and endure worse toil, than I shall have to confront to-night."

Ten minutes later I was in the saddle, while the trusty Ghiorgi cautiously led the way by paddock and coppice to a spot whence, from a knoll of rising ground, the distant lights of the city could be seen.

"Your only danger, English lord, is in the drifts!" said the man; "keep to the track, you will see it easily; since—blessed be the Panagia!—the moon is high and the sky clear, and you'll find that Deers-foot goes like a wild stag of the steppe."

It was a rough ride, but the gallant Circassian horse, floundering through heaped-up masses of snow, and clearing more than one ugly-looking fence with the courage of a trained hunter, bore me safely to Moscow.

"The Tcherny Dvor!" said I to myself, as my steed's hoofs rang on the pavement at the entrance of the town, and I saw the flat caps and gray coats of the soldiers on guard, "that I know, and can find Number Thirty-seven. The password is 'Holy Poverty.'"

Even as I spoke, I heard the quick, stirring call of a cavalry trumpet.

"If that does not mean 'boot and saddle,' I am strangely mistaken! I trust I may not be too late."

A stranger in a great, straggling city, like Moscow, is apt to lose his way, especially by night, and I had hardly reached the brandy-shop at the corner of the Tcherny Dvor, and given my horse's bridle into the hand of one of the sheepskin-clad idlers who lounged outside it, before a party of mounted Cossacks came up at a canter, and took up their station in front of the public-house, throwing out vedettes with sloped lances to right and left. I lost no time in groping my way, by the aid of the dim lanterns, to the house of which I was in quest. Here at last was Number Thirty-seven. I knocked at the squalid door as directed—thrice.

The door flew open, and two muffled figures seemed to fill up the narrow space.

"In what name?" gruffly asked one of these janitors.

"Holy Poverty!" I answered firmly, and they made room for me to pass between

them. On I went along a dimly-lighted corridor, until I suddenly came to a halt. What barred my way was a naked sword, the straight, bright blade of which had its edge turned towards me. He who held it was a man of great stature, cloaked, and wearing a black hood and mask, that left nothing but the eyes visible.

"By what right, brother?" he asked in a grave, deep voice.

"The right of Holy Poverty," I answered.

"What seek ye?" demanded the guardian, still interposing his weapon.

"Nothing, which is all," I replied, and the sword was withdrawn, while two men, whom I had not previously seen, emerged from some lurking-place, and ushered me, civilly enough, up a steep and narrow stair, through a dark passage, and then into a hall blazing with the light of many torches and candles, and nearly full of persons differing much from one another in garb and demeanour, for most were in peasants' gaberdines, and some in military uniform, while a few were in black suits, or in the attire of members of the Russian Civil Service. About two-thirds of those present wore masks, but the faces of the rest could be seen, and very various they were. There was the moujik, whose one aspiration in life was to own, in fee simple, the bit of land for which he paid rent; there was the bearded fanatic of some wild sect, pining for the day when a synod should rule Russia with fire and thumb-screw; there was the poet, the discontented noble, the ambitious burgher, the Pole with his dream that Poland might yet be free, the soldier weary of the grinding discipline of the ranks. A motley crowd were they, and very heterogeneous the motives that had affiliated them to the all-embracing society of the Nihilists. But scarcely had these reflections occurred to me, before I caught sight of Baron Olinsky, occupying a seat on a raised platform, and at once hurried to his side.

As I advanced, there was a stir and hum among the crowd.

"It's the French delegate we expected!" said one.

"No, it's the Belgian fellow of the International!" put in another with equal confidence.

"Swede! Greek! Spy!" were some of the observations which I overheard, as I elbowed my way to the dais where sat the baron, one of a group of five or six officials, all of whom, save himself, were masked.

He rose from his chair, and came forward with an air of well-feigned nonchalance to meet me.

"My young friend," he said in French, and in an easy, conversational tone, "do you know how many daggers are ready, at a word, for your throat? We are no play-actors here. The secret societies of Russia have an ugly knack of silencing inconvenient tongues."

"Baron," I answered, "I have neither the wish nor the right to pry into the objects of your meeting here. But this"—and, as I spoke, I handed to him a little pearl cross, with a diamond in the centre of it—"proves that my intrusion here was not prompted by idle curiosity."

"Irene gave you this—her mother's favourite ornament?" said the baron in an altered voice.

"She did," I answered; "and at the same time she prayed me, should the token fail, to crave your immediate return with me for her sake. The precise circumstances of the case I am not at liberty to mention."

Baron Olinsky instantly whispered a few words in the ear of the masked man who was seated next to him, and then, passing his arm through mine, hurried out, the guards at the entrance respectfully holding back at the sight of the noble-looking old man.

Scarcely had we reached the street before the barbaric trumpet of the Cossacks sounded shrilly the call, "Mount!" There was an immediate stir and clangour along the Tcherny Dvor. Then came the roll of an infantry drum, the tramp of feet, and a confused hum of voices, resounding through the frosty air.

"We are betrayed!" exclaimed the baron, turning his head. "By Heaven, they have turned out the whole garrison of Moscow!" he added, as his practised ear caught the distant bugle-calls, and the heavy tread of troops advancing. "I will go back, and warn——"

"It is too late!" I exclaimed, eagerly grasping his arm, and almost forcing him on; "your presence yonder could do no good to your friends, and would be, to yourself, sheer ruin. No, sir, for your daughter's sake, and in her name, I must urge you to be prudent, and——"

My words were interrupted by the crash of shivered woodwork. The soldiers, not finding admittance at the house we had lately left, were beating in the door with repeated blows of their clubbed muskets. Luckily, at that moment a hired droschke,

driven by my young friend the communicative coachman of a few days back, came slowly past. I hailed the driver, and having once seen the baron seated in the carriage, pushed my way through the gathering crowd to where I had left my horse, remounted, giving a rouble to the man who held the bridle, and rode off.

A short half-hour, and we were safe beneath the roof of the Château Olinsky. I say "safe," but only relatively so, for on that night the military and police swooped down to make what is called in official parlance a domiciliary visit to the mansion of my host, and the castle was ransacked from garret to cellar; but to the infinite disgust of the public prosecutor, and the chagrin of the treacherous majordomo, no written evidence of a compromising character was discovered. The authorities were therefore reluctantly unable to include the baron in the sweeping indictment which was drawn against the Nihilists captured at the meeting, of whom some twenty were transported to Siberia, as many sent to serve with the Army of the Caucasus; and the rest let off with various terms of imprisonment.

"It is, however, the emperor's pleasure, Baron Olinsky, that you travel for two years," said the civil governor, at the end of the last lengthy examination to which we were subjected; "and for you, young sir, the sooner you get back to your counting-house in St. Petersburg, the better!"

"We shall meet again!" said the baron, cheerily, as, at parting, he shook me by the hand.

"I hope so," added Irene, her dark eyes swimming in tears, as her soft fingers coyly returned the pressure of mine. And the wish was fulfilled, for am I not now a rising man in our prosperous house, known at the present day as that of Irvine, Kirby, and Vaughan, and is not my wife's name Irene? I ask no questions when we visit at the old château, or when my father-in-law comes to stay with us in St. Petersburg, but I imagine that experience has cured the baron of his sympathy with the Nihilists.

OUR OPENING DAY.

FOUR o'clock of the afternoon, in the streets of London, on the 8th of February of this present year of grace. Every where, between Charing-cross and Knightsbridge, there are to be witnessed those signs which surely speak of the gradual subsi-

dence of a great popular excitement. A huge multitude, broken up at intervals into small groups, slowly and languidly straggles home. The ceremony of the day is over; the storm of enthusiasm has spent itself. But the effects of that event are very visible, and south-western London is in the groundswell which succeeds the commotion of the elements.

Whence that appearance and what it means the intelligent reader will, from the date above mentioned, have already divined. Queen Victoria has to-day opened the fourth session of her ninth Parliament, and very many of her loyal lieges have assisted in some part or other of the ceremony. Have there been any disloyal lieges? I think not; and yet I know not quite what to say. Strolling across the Green-park, I encounter a moody-looking and malodorous pair, some of whose criticisms on the monarchical principle I cannot choose but hear. One at least of these scowling but perfectly harmless democrats I have seen once before to-day, and I think once even previous to that. His chin is rough and stubbly, and of a dirty blue colour, with a beard of some days' growth. His coat shines in the setting sun with wear and grease. He has no linen visible. In his mouth is a short pipe, from which he discharges jerky blasts of intolerable smoke; and, as he leans across the iron railings in converse with his companion, I see him pointing with the finger of scornful menace in the direction of Buckingham Palace. The spectacle of the charity girls and the Duke of York's boys, who have been marched out to catch a glimpse of their sovereign, incites him to wrath. I hear the words "mockery" and "despotism," "tyrant" and "oppressor," "prince" and "flunkey," "reason," "humanity," and "republic;" and, as I hear them, I know that I have stumbled on my old friend the anti-monarchical "working-man," who never does any work, but who fulminates against the Crown at a discussion forum, and who has christened his first-born son, Robespierre Cromwell Cloutz.

But where did I see him some three hours ago? Ah, I remember. Equipped with a special pass from Colonel Henderson, I have wandered this morning for upwards of two hours in and between the crowd, drawn up at each point of the royal route in eager expectancy. I have been suffered to pass up and down the thoroughfares cleared for Her Majesty's carriage.

I have mixed with my fellow-men of every sort, condition, or degree. I have penetrated and moved among the miscellaneous multitude between Charing-cross and Palace-yard, and I have taken careful note of the far more select assemblage which has waited to welcome royalty from and along the Mall to the Horse Guards. I have been invited to drink out of huge pewter pots, with whose contents little knots of thirsty souls have beguiled the tedious waiting-time. I have noticed the admirable temper of the populace, and the perfect order which has been maintained—thanks quite as much to the crowd itself as to the mounted myrmidons of Captain Harris, and the dragoons, who have varied agreeably the sombre monotony of the civilian garb, with scarlet and white, gleaming helmet, and resplendent cuirass. More than this: I have been a spectator of several false alarms, have heard more than once the cry raised, "Here she comes!" when the royal cortège was not yet in view, and have been well-nigh deafened by the ringing cheer which has been the prompt sequel of the mendacious shout. Let me think. Yes, there is no mistake. Conspicuous among these demonstratively loyal subjects of Her Majesty, carried away by that irresistible contagion of loyal enthusiasm which a great crowd communicates, was the terrible republican who is now shaking his finger at Buckingham Palace—the democratic firebrand of the discussion forum, the modern apostle of Marat and Tom Paine. Look on this picture and on this! Surely I think the contrast between the demeanour of my friend, in the morning and the afternoon of the same day, may point a useful lesson. It is this: that in England loyalty is a practical and all-controlling force; disloyalty, at the worst, an unsubstantial and melodramatic sentiment.

We carry with us, let the lady or gentleman whom I am addressing understand, a ticket, conferred upon us by the hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain, and entitling us to a place in the House of Peers on the opening of Parliament by Her Majesty. Called upon, by an endless series of policemen and other officials, to show our credentials, we emerge into Palace-yard, and so thread our way through a dense mass of human beings into Westminster Hall. Up the flight of stone stairs, sharp to the left, then up a few more stairs, and we are in the lobby, which is a sort of vestibule to both Houses of Parliament.

Here there are more men and women, occupying the little space between the marble effigies of the political worthies of England. An apoplectic-looking old lady fans herself, with a pocket-handkerchief, under the shadow of Mr. Pitt, who guards the entrance on the right hand. A weak curate shrugs his shoulders and blinks his eyes, while above him is the substantial form of Charles James Fox, with its protuberant stomach, outstretched finger, and genially-smiling face. Midway between the counterfeit presentments of Burke and Grattan, is a gentleman, who appears to be taking some furtive refreshment from a pocket-pistol; while the chivalrous figure of Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, at the other end of the lobby, is the centre of a wondering group of perspiring agriculturists.

Amid brilliant bursts of February sunshine, and after more examination of tickets, I arrive at last at the bottom of the stairs which are to conduct me to my post in the House of Lords. Interrogated first by a gentleman who might easily be mistaken for an elderly diplomatist in evening dress, but who is one of the lower officials of the House, and secondly by a policeman, who talks about peers in an indifferent and contemptuous manner, I mount the stairs leading to the reporters' and the strangers' galleries. At the door of the former I am confronted by a venerable and familiar figure. He is, in point of fact, the janitor of the limited space set apart in the chamber of our hereditary legislators for the gentlemen of the press. The peculiarity of this aged functionary, who, no doubt, firmly believes himself to be an integral part of the British Constitution, is that it takes him exactly five years to remember a name or to recognise a face, and that, however indisputable their claim, he considers it part of his duty to regard all applicants for admission to the place over which he presides as impostors. From the curious way in which he examines my ticket, he would appear to think that I have deliberately forged the signature of Lord Aveland. He looks on the document with more than suspicion; investigates it through his spectacles; shakes his head; says he hopes it is all right; stares me hard in the face; asks me whether he has not seen me before, and finally enquires my patronymic. He thinks he does know the name, consents to accept my ticket, and so I am at length permitted to pass in.

It is exceedingly improbable that the building in which we now are has ever witnessed so brilliant or interesting a sight. The decorative portions of the House of Lords, if somewhat barbaric in their splendour, are superbly rich and handsome. But they require a much larger supply of light than they usually receive in the month of February to be seen to advantage. To-day the sun does what a winter sun has seldom done before: it lights up the whole splendid structure and exercises its influence upon the assembled crowd; it inspires the whole scene with a lively and cheerful animation. Lord Redesdale has not yet made his appearance; but the present aspect of the peers' chamber irresistibly suggests the protest which that genial nobleman lodged, some years ago, against the admission of ladies to the galleries of the House, on the ground that they made the place look like a casino; a remark which elicited from Lord Granville the reply, that his noble friend was a greater authority than he could pretend to be himself on the subject of such haunts. "The ladies in Parliament," is a vision which is literally fulfilled to-day. Above, below, around, the ladies predominate. Not only do they fill the galleries usually devoted to their fair presence, they have seized, and rise, tier on tier in, the strangers' gallery, and are gradually filling the body of the House itself. Presently an hereditary legislator in the black frock-coat of every-day life, looks in at the door; disappears; reappears, not unabashed, clad in the ermine and scarlet robes of his order. Surely that noble lord who has just entered thus attired—and who, having first perambulated the chambers with a jaunty stride, and examined with an air of surprise the benches, backless for the occasion and for the better economy of space—is none other than the distinguished author, whose passion for paradox is almost equal to his gift of poetry? But to-day the statesman and the bard are merged in the squire of dames, and the noble author of many delightful lyrics assumes the functions of a master of the ceremonies. At first he is almost alone; presently comes a second noble lord, and then a third, then more noble lords, and yet more, till the House is fairly full of scarlet-clad figures.

It is now past one o'clock. As I look right opposite me through the two doors on either side of the throne, at the other end of the House, I can clearly descry the

passing and repassing of multitudinous robes, the waving of plumes, the flashing of diamonds. In the last ten minutes a decided change has come over the scene below me. As in the galleries, so in the benches in the body of the House, the ladies have taken their seats, all of them in evening dress, enveloped in opera-cloaks. The peers are at last gradually bringing themselves to an anchor, and the buzz of conversation, though not yet hushed, perceptibly subsides. The lords spiritual, in black satin and white lawn, have also come; but they are not in their accustomed place on the right of the woolsack. The episcopal benches are, in fact, given up, for the nonce, partly to ladies, partly to ambassadors; and the bishops are relegated to the seats arranged for the occasion in front of the woolsack. The casual observer might now say that the capacities of the House are exhausted. Lord Aveland, dressed, not in the robe and ermine of a peer, but in the Windsor uniform, walks once or twice round, to see whether any additional seats can be found. He has scarcely completed his last circuit when there suddenly falls a momentary silence of interest and suspense on the assemblage. Who are they that come in scarlet and purple robes, reaching from head to foot, and spangled with buttons of gold and vermillion, suggestive of something between Roman cardinals and the heroes and heroines of the willow-plate pattern? His Serene Excellency the Chinese Ambassador and suite. Of the latter some are told off to the galleries upstairs, while four take their places on the episcopal benches. No apparition of the kind has been witnessed before in either chamber of the Imperial Parliament at Westminster, and the select society which fills the House of Lords proceeds to devour the legates from the Celestial Empire with its gaze. If it were possible that this society did so far forget itself, I should be tempted to say that the first sight of the Chinese Envoy and his satellites provoked a distinct laugh. Be that as it may, the illustrious mandarins cared for none of these things, and examined with evident interest and amusement everything around them, while, to all appearance, remaining sublimely unconscious that they were the objects of any curiosity themselves.

Twenty minutes to two. The members of the corps diplomatique have taken their places. Russian, Austrian, German, Turkish,

and French representatives have chatted pleasantly and interchanged jokes—as if war were a word unknown in the vocabulary of modern civilisation, and the Eastern Question had no kind of existence. Musurus Pasha has been greeted with every show of cordiality by high-church bishops and other Turkish politicians; and the severe simplicity of the costume of the United States minister, who wears a plain black coat, unadorned by one of those orders with which the breasts of his companions are ablaze, has evidently been noticed, and is as plainly being discussed by feminine critics. Behold, another burst of colour. The judges in a body, headed by Chief Baron Kelly, have trooped in. But is there room? Yes; they can just be squeezed in, close to the woolsack, the normal occupant of which is on the point of entering. It wants just ten minutes to two, and, before I see the Lord Chancellor himself, I catch the glitter of the mace-bearer in front of him. His lordship, as he takes his seat, evidently finds it a tight fit; but he makes himself as comfortable as circumstances will allow, and chats easily with his neighbours, clerical, legal, and lay.

Seven minutes more have elapsed, it is three minutes to two to a second; an officer, habited in black, whispers something into the ear of Lord Cairns, who rises with stately deliberation, and when his attendant has shouldered before him the emblem of his high office, vanishes through the open door on the left of the throne. We all know now what is the next stage in the proceedings, and no great effort of imagination does it require to picture the scene which is being enacted outside the Houses of Parliament; the flutter of white handkerchiefs which has greeted the Queen in her progress down Whitehall, the plaudits rung forth from thousands of lungs, the welcome of the Prince of Wales, and the keen satisfaction experienced by the Prime Minister with a reception almost as hearty as that accorded to the Heir Apparent himself—these things I know, rather than actually hear. What at the present moment I can hear is the low buzz of anticipatory talk, and the distant braying of trumpets. I know what these far-off sounds mean—that the Queen of the realm is now close at hand, and that the crowning ceremony of the day will not be delayed many minutes. Presently the door on the right of the throne, recently shut for a few minutes, is flung open, and the Prince and Princess of Wales—the former wear-

ing a peer's robe—enter. But here, be it noticed, his Royal Highness has an exceedingly difficult task to perform. Between the woolsack and the throne—the latter usually protected by a railing—there is, in the normal condition of the House of Lords, an interval of some twenty feet. To-day, the woolsack has been drawn back to within almost an arm's-length of the royal seat, and quite close to its steps. Notice, therefore, especially the skill with which the Prince guides his consort through this narrow channel, depositing her finally on the woolsack, with her back to the Chancellor, and himself in a chair on the right of the throne. Meanwhile, lords, ladies, and commoners have all stood up to greet the future King and Queen of England. Now behold the six pursuivants, brave in gold and purple; the four heralds, in gold and crimson; the equerries and grooms in waiting, in number six more;—these head the royal procession. Those two gentlemen who follow, clad in the ordinary uniform, black and gold, of the royal household, are the Comptroller and Treasurer, Lord Henry Somerset and Lord Henry Thynne. The middle-aged erect gentleman, in the attire of the Queen's aide-de-camp, is the Duke of Richmond and Gordon. Next to him are Colonel Clifford, usher of the Black Rod, in a suit of mourning, and Garter King-at-Arms, in a gorgeous panoply of gold. The Earl-Marshal and the Lord Great Chamberlain follow; and last, immediately before the Queen, comes, in his peer's robes, the Prime Minister, Lord Beaconsfield himself. Aloft he carries that which is miscalled the sword, and should rather be described as the scabbard, of state. His face is perfectly expressionless; his step deliberate; not a single muscle in his arm, considerable as the tension must be, appears to move.

But before the Prime Minister has assumed his place on the left of the throne, an effect of indescribable brilliance has been witnessed. Her Majesty is now inside the House of Lords. Immediately on her first entrance the whole company stand up. The ladies had previously been observed to be submitting their opera-cloaks to some mysterious operation; and simultaneously, at the instant that they rose from their seats, their mantles descended from their shoulders, and displayed a glorious "gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls" and flashing of diamonds. Her Majesty has now traversed the strait already described past the wool-

sack, has shaken hands with the Prince of Wales, and has taken her seat on the throne with the ermine robe thrown over it. On her left are the Princesses Louise and Beatrice. The Lord Chancellor stands on the right of the Queen, and next to him is the Marquis of Winchester—whose personal appearance is remarkable as being very strongly suggestive of the type of Englishman seen on the French stage—bearing the Cap of Maintenance on a cushion of crimson velvet. The whole space about the throne is densely thronged with peers, holding various offices.

Very slightly does Her Majesty, after taking her seat, incline her head. The signal is, however, quite intelligible, and is interpreted aright. The company once more seat themselves, but the ladies do not resume their opera-cloaks. Amid a breathless silence Black Rod approaches the royal presence, and at once retires. His mission is to summon the House of Commons to the bar of the Peers. Nothing could be more impressive than the absolute stillness which now prevails. Her Majesty sits motionless as a statue. The Prince of Wales is equally still and silent. Lord Beaconsfield does not relax a line of his countenance. This singular suspense lasts for five minutes. Black Rod returns, and, in the twinkling of an eye, there comes the sound as of a mighty, rushing wind. Nearer it gets, and nearer. It is Her Majesty's faithful Commons. The officers of the House have found it just possible to keep back, by a rather complicated machinery of ropes and barriers, the course, till the Speaker and the Leader of the House have taken their place in the reserved box behind the bar, at the side immediately opposite the throne. But after that, comes the deluge; and the expedient of the "ballot," instituted ostensibly for the purpose of preventing a crush on these occasions, breaks down lamentably. The whole thing is a wild stampede, and members of the House of Commons, as they flock into the presence of their sovereign, remind one of nothing more than a herd of undergraduates wildly rushing into the Sheldonian Theatre on Commemoration-day. But order is restored, and there is once again a deep silence. The Lord Chancellor makes an obeisance to his royal mistress, and presents to her a paper—the Queen's Speech. But Her Majesty very slightly shakes her head, on which Lord Cairns, drawing himself up to his full height, retains the document, spreads

it open, and begins to read it in a tone audible throughout the entire chamber. This occupies as nearly as possible ten minutes. Her Majesty then leaves the throne, and passes from the House with the same ceremony that accompanied her entrance. The pent-up torrent of general talk again bursts forth, the company begin to disperse, the kaleidoscopic splendours melt away, and the pageant is over.

A second, and, in many respects, a more interesting function is yet to be performed to-day. The first debate of the session takes place this evening; and before that time a new peer has to be formally installed in their lordships' house. I reach the House of Lords just in time to witness the Earl of Beaconsfield—who, by-the-bye, does not enter the Robing-room, but retires for robing purposes to an apartment specially set apart for him—introduced to their lordships by the Earls of Derby and Bradford. It is a simple yet not unimpressive ceremonial. The Prime Minister and his two friends are preceded by a little procession. The circuit of the chamber is twice solemnly made by the group; Lord Beaconsfield is presented to the Chancellor whom he himself created; and finally retires from the chamber by the door on the left of the throne, to doff his robes, and to reappear, after a few minutes, in the plain dress of an English gentleman as leader of the House of Lords. In the debate that followed, Lord Beaconsfield delivered his maiden speech in the Peers, and that speech was a success, secured by the self-same arts as those which years ago won for Mr. Disraeli his ascendancy over the House of Commons.

MY SECOND SCHOOL.

ONE of the Brothers Smith, in a lively essay, exhorted his reader to catch opportunity by the forelock, if ever he found himself in the company of a set of "wretches" who had never heard of Joe Miller, but yet were perfectly capable of appreciating him. Such an opportunity might never occur again, and the most, consequently, ought to be made of it. Without the remotest chance of balk or hindrance, the man well posted up in his "Joe" is bound, if for the first and only time in his life, to find himself generally amusing.

It is not with the slightest suspicion that the rare combination of ignorance

with appreciativeness to which Mr. Smith refers is to be found among the readers of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, that I now venture to repeat a very ancient jest. I ward off the sneers with which it will be received, because it singularly symbolises the somewhat dismal narrative which will presently follow.

Well, then: An amateur painter, who was repairing his house, told a friend that he had been struck by a bright notion. The ceiling of his library was very dirty, so he purposed to whitewash it, and then paint upon it a picture, representing Apollo and the nine Muses. The friend, who had his own views as to the proficiency of the amateur, suggested, as an improvement, that the ceiling should be painted first, and whitewashed afterwards.

Of my second school, which was simply a day-school, and which I entered at the age of ten, I can safely say that it was apparently designed to answer the purpose of the whitewash in the above story, supposing the advice of the friend to have been accurately followed. Whatever we had been taught at my preparatory school,* the second school appeared to have been framed with the express purpose of washing out; and in this case, the picture to be obliterated was not only not bad, but very good. I am bound, however, in justice to say, that I and my fellow-pupils had tolerable memories. Our previous knowledge was not obliterated. Simply, we made no progress. Learning was made easy, because it was made small.

Stop! don't let me be incorrect. Objects become somewhat indistinct, when one looks at them through a vista of more than fifty years, unless one takes great pains to secure accuracy. Though we made no progress, we made a great show of making progress; and that was something to the credit of Dr. Saunders, our reverend preceptor. A dissenting minister of considerable repute in a suburb of London, in the immediate vicinity of that inhabited by Mrs. Jackson, he had none of that hatred of "Mars, Bacchus, Apollo," to which Lord Macaulay refers as prevalent among the early Puritans. If he called upon Paterfamilias, with the intention of securing some young hopeful as a pupil, he would roll jauntily in an arm-chair, and talk merrily of the achievement of learning sixty lines of Horace with a minimum of

labour, if only his method of instruction was conscientiously followed. What that method was, I never found out; and although, with two or three others, I was indubitably at the top of the school, I never read any Horace.

The strict attention paid to the rudiments of the English tongue, in a school apparently classical, might to some appear excessive; and I must own that, having been taught under Mrs. Jackson to spell quite as correctly as I spell now, I was not a little surprised when I was requested to learn a column of three syllables in an English spelling-book. Indeed, I was dissatisfied with the proceeding, and had the audacity to ask Dr. Saunders whether we were not going to do any Latin that afternoon. He was openly displeased with the question, and told me that if I liked it I might pursue my Latin at once, instead of getting money by sticking to the spelling-book. The appeal to the pocket implied that, if we had gone through our three syllables in a satisfactory manner, we might each have received a penny.

The employment of pence as stimulants to the acquisition of a mastery over the difficulties of the Latin accidence was remarkable. Dr. Saunders would frequently burst into the school-room, arresting attention by smartly striking his desk with his cane, and cheerfully crying out:

"Boys, boys, hear! Of a most blue pig in a most green field! The first who will turn that into Latin shall receive a penny!"

Responsive shouts were heard on all sides, and the first shouter, if correct, duly received his penny, which was euphemistically called "merit money."

I have here to explain that, in spite of its spasmodic manifestations, the genial offer of merit money was part of a system. As quarter-day approached, Trowel, a very big boy, appointed to the office by the doctor, would walk round the school-room, armed with a pencil and a slip of paper, and would ask the pupils questions as to the extra items to be inserted in the bill; how many books they had had, and so on. Among the questions was one relating to the probable amount of merit money. The boy, who had received his penny at very irregular intervals, had not the slightest notion on the subject; but the ever-ready Trowel would assist his memory by saying: "Well, half-a-crown won't be too much, will it?" The boy thought not; and Trowel pursued his quest elsewhere,

* *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*, New Series, Vol. 17, p. 5, "My Preparatory School."

sometimes eliciting five shillings as the possible figure. Certain I am that the aggregate number of pence, received by any one boy during any one quarter, never approached half-a-crown.

When I say that we seemingly did learn Greek under the auspices of Dr. Saunders, some readers may be of opinion that I contradict myself. But the opinion will cease when they learn what an utter sham our Greek was. A Scotch element, from some unknown reason or other, prevailed in the school. We had Dalzel's Greek and Ruddiman's Latin Grammar, while our contemporaries looked up to Eton—all bad enough, when compared with the elementary books which, in obedience to a German impulse, are constantly published now. We had, also, Dalzel's *Analecta Minora*, made up of presumably easy Greek excerpts; but the crack book was a Glasgow edition of *Anacreon*.

I suppose this book is still in vogue on the other side of the Tweed; for whenever I have referred to it in the course of conversation with North-country friends, I have invariably found that they recognised the article. It was a very thin volume, clad in that irrepressible sheep-skin which was once regarded as the proper clothing for spelling-books and Tutors' Assistants, and at the bottom of each page was a literal prose translation of the Greek above.

Now, only imagine two years of Greek study culminating with *Anacreon*! There is no need to enquire here how far the pretty poems, attributed to the old debauchee of Teos, are spurious; but anyone who knows anything about the matter knows that, if there is one author least fitted among others to familiarise a student with the peculiarities of the Greek language, that one is *Anacreon*.

But with our Latin, of course, we did something. Did we? As far as I myself am concerned, I can safely report that, if the Greek I learned was little, the Latin was still less. I had learned no Greek at Mrs. Jackson's, and I will do Dr. Saunders the justice to say that under him I did learn the alphabet; but as for Latin, all I could do was to keep up the amount I had brought with me from the preparatory establishment. In cultivating the language of Cicero—to whom, be it remarked, not the slightest allusion was ever made—we were bound tight to that eminent classic *Eutropius*, with occasional deviations into the second book of Virgil's *Æneid*, in which latter region we were most liberally assisted.

All respect to *Eutropius*! Within the last few years he has shot up into something like celebrity as the historian who, in the most lucid manner, recorded the foundation of the Dacian colony by Trajan, to which the Roumanians trace their origin; and of late the Danubian provinces have figured among the threads which are entangled in that great knot, the Eastern Question. But, half a century ago, there were no Roumanians bearing that name, and the youth of twelve must have been a marvel of geographical erudition if he knew anything about Moldavia and Wallachia in connection with ancient history. The fact was, *Eutropius*, still known as very useful in his way, is remarkably easy, and was made even easier by the addition of an "ordo;" that is to say, an arrangement of the Latin words in English order, placed under the proper text, as in the Delphin editions. Even this would not do; that the task might be easier still, a boy read not the text but the "ordo," and this, be it repeated, was our crack book. There was a vague tradition that somebody had once studied *Cornelius Nepos*; but I set that down among the myths of the place.

Many books were not purchased; but, thanks to the financial genius that pervaded the establishment, and which, I think, was embodied in the person of Trowel, some of those that were sold must have fetched high prices. The boys, as a rule, were of that happy-go-lucky kind who, when they quit school, do not care to be burdened with reminiscences, but leave their books behind them. In that case the volumes were invariably sold over again; and he was a lucky youth, on the fly-leaf of whose *Eutropius* the name of a former school-fellow was not inscribed.

There are many worthy people now living who are of opinion that, at our "great schools," too much time is expended on the study of the dead languages; and if they have followed me to this point they are probably admiring Dr. Saunders for the quantity of sound useful knowledge that he diffused, while thus lightly skimming over the surface of Greek and Latin. If so, they are egregiously mistaken. If the reverend doctor aspired to anything besides the reputation of a popular preacher, it was to the character of a promulgator of classical lore. No head master at Eton or Harrow, in the good old days, had stronger views in this matter than he. We all, indeed, learned

writing and arithmetic under the guidance of an authorised assistant, but when some ill-fated wretch was compelled, at the request of his ignoble parents, to solve a few problems in Bonycastle's Geometry, I well recollect with what contempt the pursuit was regarded by his fellows. Geometry was all very well for a future carpenter, but what possible interest could be taken in it by any one who aspired to the character of a gentleman? Of course the vulgar science fell into the province of the assistant, for never would the august Dr. Saunders have been seen with a pair of base mechanical compasses in his hands. Did they think highly of mathematics at Cambridge? If so, so much the worse for Cambridge.

But the royal road to French discovered by the Rev. Dr. Saunders was a masterpiece. Two of us were placed side by side at a desk, with an old-fashioned French novel (warranted harmless) before us. This we were expected simply to puzzle out together, without being subject to any examination, either by the doctor, or by any other third party. That, in this irresponsible position we ever looked at the novel at all is to me a matter for marvel, but, most assuredly, we did so; though, it must be owned, the narrative was frequently interrupted by conversation on our own private affairs. On one occasion, the illicit discourse was interrupted by the doctor, who, with considerable ingenuity had contrived to place his head, unobserved, between ours, and harshly commented on our abuse of the trust with which we were so handsomely and so unacademically honoured. We mildly pleaded that the novel was "dry," and—wonder of wonders!—when we returned to the school-room after the half-hour spent in the play-ground habitually conceded to the boys in the course of a day, which lasted from about half-past nine to one, our plea was thought feasible, and the triumphant doctor placed before our eyes the more amusing Hermann of Unna, a work translated from the German, and of which an English version was eagerly read at a time when Mrs. Anne Radcliffe was at the height of her popularity. I am able to affirm that we did find this book more entertaining than its predecessor. On what ground, with our very imperfect mastery over the French tongue, we found one book more amusing than another, I can't conjecture.

Even our studies of the vernacular were sometimes pursued after a laissez-aller fashion, which scarcely accorded with the importance attached to them. Dr. Saunders had an aged father-in-law, who had cut off whatever communication was left between himself and the outer world by taking strong and frequent pinches of coarse black rappee, and this respectable but somewhat dingy gentleman was occasionally entrusted with the superintendence of a body of readers. One day, I observed from a distance that the boys, who were ostensibly reading by turns Goldsmith's Abridged History of Rome, were all shaking with laughter, which they scarcely attempted to suppress, but which was utterly unnoticed by their auditor. What could it mean? To my delight I was summoned to take a place in the class, and the boy whom I found next to me immediately solved the mystery by whispering into my ear:

"Such fun! Whenever a word ends with 'ing,' say 'ink' instead. We're all doing it, and he don't find it out."

I entered at once into the scheme, which was, indeed, productive of much amusement. When we had to utter such words as "approachink" or "considerink," the mirth was mild; but when it fell to the lot of one fortunate youth to state that Tarquin was "Kink" of Rome, there was almost a roar. Still our excellent old gentleman never discovered that anything abnormal had occurred; and, when we were dismissed, no doubt he confessed, in his inward heart, like England in the old sea-song, "That every man that day had done his duty."

As might be supposed, corporal punishment was not much in vogue at a school so extraordinarily lax in discipline. What would have been the fate of the audacious "kink-maker" under the rule of Mrs. Jackson I dread to conjecture. But the learned doctor did not wholly ignore the use of the cane, though it might be observed that this was regulated rather by the state of the doctor's own temper than by the degree of a boy's delinquency. One peculiarity showed at least that he had studied his Roman history to some advantage, and had taken the elder Brutus for his model. Among the pupils were his two sons; and if ever the cane was in requisition with an exceptional vigour, what clouds of dust rose from the jackets of those devoted lads! If we—chosen few—who stood at the

head of the classical scholars, had been passed into the first part of the *Æneid*, we should at once have been reminded of the illustrious Trojan concealed in a cloud by his divine mother. But we knew of no book but the second.

All things considered, I am of opinion that, if any of the pupils at the academy which I have tried to describe, and of which I saw the end, are alive now, they still look back with a kindly feeling upon the figure of Dr. Saunders himself. His notions of instruction were detestable; but, in spite of occasional outbursts of anger, he was essentially a good-natured, kindly man, endowed with much native humour; and, in his most cheerful moods, he loved to tell droll stories that would make the benches rock with laughter. And as for his gloomier moments, it must be remembered that he had a very large family, and that he was very poor.

WHAT HE COST HER.

BY JAMES PAYN,

AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGBERD," "AT HER MERCY,"
"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII. SENTIMENT AT LETTER Z.

NOTWITHSTANDING the commissary's invitation, and Ella's eager acceptance of it, Gracie and she did not go to Woolwich for some time. No day was actually appointed for the visit, and in the meantime Ella "went out" a good deal, taking her friend with her. She had a feverish desire for society, and carried black Care about with her to many a gay scene, which she probably enjoyed even less than Gracie, who had just then but little heart for them. From Lady Elizabeth's particular coterie Mrs. Cecil Landon was excluded, for reasons with which we are acquainted; but the very rumours that were in circulation about her made her all the more popular elsewhere. Among outside circles her story had grown (by the process which is known in our drawing-rooms as "tradition") into quite the dimensions of a romance. It was said that she had been attached, before her marriage, to Mr. Whympers-Hobson, whose poverty had alone forbidden their union; and that, after his too-late accession of fortune, he had paid her marked attention, and been, in consequence, thrown into the Thames by her husband. Moreover, that that gentleman, unsatisfied by this act of vengeance, was still in dudgeon

as respected his wife's conduct, and had as good—or bad—as abandoned her. Under these circumstances we may imagine how great an attraction was this beautiful and forlorn young woman to all fashionable circles. One distinguished personage, a rival of Lady Elizabeth's as a caterer for the public pleasure, actually hit upon the plan of inviting Mr. Whympers-Hobson and Mrs. Cecil Landon to her house upon the same evening, "just to see how they would behave." In the same spirit do the barbarian princes of the East introduce in their arenas wild animals that have every reason to shun one another, and take pleasure in their pain. The exhibition was a failure; for just as in the Eastern spectacles the tiger will sometimes turn tail at the sight of some meek horned creature, so did this supposed Don Juan flinch and shrink from Ella's presence, whose splendid "ox eyes" seemed to be unaware of his existence, as she swept by him as majestic as Juno.

"You behaved most admirably, my dear," said Lady Greene—whose active partisanship in Ella's cause was doing her, at least, as much harm as good; "and in a manner that does you infinite credit. Some women in your position, slandered as you have been, and deserted—well, I won't say deserted, but neglected, by her husband—would have made a point of encouraging young Hobson."

"Indeed," said Ella, with superb contempt.

"I don't mean to say that it would have been justifiable," explained her ladyship; "but that it would have been human nature. I am truly glad to see that you are above it, my dear."

But, alas! poor Ella was very human, though her humanity did not exhibit itself in the direction indicated. Mr. Whympers-Hobson was as indifferent to her, and as much beneath her notice, as the pattern of the carpet she trod upon; but that "neglect which was almost desertion" of her husband was wearing away her very heart. It was now three weeks since he had left home for the second time, and not a line had she had from him. That she had not written to him was scarcely to be wondered at. What could she write? What argument could she urge—what tender plea could she express which she had not used already in vain? Moreover, she was under the great disadvantage of not knowing what was his

real attitude towards her. That he was studiously and purposely neglectful of her was now certain; but was he absolutely hostile? If not, would not any strong remonstrance—and in no other style could she have brought herself to write—be likely to drive him to hostility. She did not even know, exactly, where he was. The address, "Eagle Hotel, Wellborough," would find him, doubtless, but by no means it seemed at once. She had learnt that much from his father.

Mr. Landon, senior, had called one day, evidently in utter ignorance of the relations between his daughter-in-law and her husband, and asked her, "What the deuce had become of Cecil?" He had written to him twice, it appeared, upon some pressing matter of business and received no reply. Then an answer had come from Wellborough, stating that he had been detained "in the South;" but without any explanation of the causes of his detention.

"What does he mean by 'in the South,' confound him?" said the old gentleman, petulantly; "he talks as if he were a ship becalmed in the tropics. Where has he been, and what is he doing with himself?"

"I know nothing about him," was Ella's quiet reply.

"Nothing about him? Nothing about your own husband?"

Then the old gentleman gave a gasp which ended in a prolonged whistle.

"I will run down to Wellborough myself," said he; "I think it will be better, my dear, than your going." He spoke with an evident effort at indifference, but the very tenderness of his tone had a cruel significance.

"I think it would be much better," returned Ella, coldly.

The old gentleman was a man of action, and started that very day. "I wonder who she is?" was what he kept saying to himself throughout the journey, unconscious that his idea was a plagiarism. The next evening he was back again, and drove from the station straight to his daughter-in-law's. His face was gloomy and stern until he saw her, when it brightened up a little.

"Well, my dear, I am glad to say that matters are not so bad as I almost suspected they might have been. No one at least has robbed you of your husband's affections."

"It is no matter, since they are gone," answered she bitterly.

"Do not let us say that, Ella. They are temporarily alienated, but that, I sincerely trust, is all. All married people have their quarrels, and there are generally faults on both sides. Of course your marrying him under false pretences—I mean under an assumed name—was a very serious matter."

"That has been forgiven, Mr. Landon. I do not defend it, and I did not to Cecil himself; and he forgave me. He may make use of it now as an excuse for his cruelty, but he has some other motive for it."

"Well, it isn't what we feared it was, at all events. Cecil has his quarters at the inn at Wellborough—I made inquiries about all that—when he is not down at the branch establishment farther south. It is my impression that he is in the sulks, and that is all. We had some very sharp words between us about his behaviour to you, and I spoke my mind, I promise you. The result is that we have not parted on the best of terms."

"I am sincerely sorry for that, Mr. Landon."

"I am sure you are; but after all it is you who are most to be pitied. I think Cecil is acting very ill, and I told him so. If he is really still troubled about the circumstances of your marriage, as I strove in vain to convince him, it is his duty to have the ceremony performed again."

"Never," cried Ella, with glowing face. "That would be an admission which I would never stoop to make. Cecil is right there, however wrong he may be elsewhere. The marriage is perfectly legal, and he knows it."

"I hope so; for, as I told him, if he doubted it, and yet was averse to adopt the remedy, he was a regular Henry the Eighth—a fellow that seeks an excuse to get rid of his wife, just because he is tired of her. Not," added the old gentleman hastily, "that Cecil can be tired of you; there is no parallel so far, though I pushed it with him still farther. 'Why, one would really think, sir,' said I, 'that there was some Anne Boleyn in the case, for whom you wished to exchange Ella.' That put Cecil's back up at once—so you may be sure he had nothing of the sort in his mind—and we fell out in good earnest. I don't care, however, comparatively speaking, about his cutting up rough with me; we have agreed to differ upon other subjects before this, as you know; but I am ashamed at his behaviour towards you,

Ella. 'Don't you imagine,' said I, 'that because you are my son, I shall take your part against your own lawful wife, when I know you are in the wrong.'

"You are a just man, Mr. Landon, and I thank you," returned Ella with dignity. "Your son, unhappily, is not just—at least, in this matter—and you have failed, as I expected you to fail."

"Still it's only a matter of time, my dear," said the old gentleman soothingly; "it is impossible that he can keep away very long from such a home as this, and such a wife as you; it's not in human nature. He'll be coming back soon, I'll warrant you, quite penitent and tractable, like the prodigal son in the scriptures."

"He will not find me here after to-morrow, as I am going to stay at Woolwich," said Ella quietly.

"Indeed! Cecil did not seem to be aware of that."

"Probably not, as I have not told him," answered Ella quietly. "No communication has passed between us since he left. I am going to stay with Gracie and her father."

"But if he comes home," suggested the old gentleman, "and finds you gone, won't that be a little awkward?"

"If he comes home, he will probably write beforehand, and his letter will be forwarded to me; if not, the 'awkwardness' will be of his own making."

The old gentleman said no more, but looked distressed and troubled. If he had found obstinacy in Cecil, he had found an equal resolution not to yield in Ella; and it augured ill for the result. His tidings, however, had not, in fact, been wholly unwelcome to the neglected wife. It was a secret relief to her to be assured that Cecil's conduct, however caused, was not dictated by an unworthy attachment for another woman. She felt more charitable and less hard towards him, notwithstanding his cruel silence, than she had done for weeks. Perhaps her leaving home conduced to this. If her married life had been but short, it had been, upon the whole, and until the last few months, a happy one. The roof that she was now about to quit—alas! without him—was still a sacred one to her. She had not been able to exile from her heart the memories of vanished joys, and this had been the home of them. There was many a tender tie to be snapped yet, before she could play that independent rôle she had mapped out for herself, with ease, or, at least, without

the consciousness that she was acting a part

"We are wiser than we know," says the poet, and he might have added that we are more gentle-hearted also.

It was Gracie's wish to precede her friend by, at all events, a few days to Woolwich; Officers' Quarters, letter Z, had never presented a very attractive appearance even in her poor mother's time; and now that they had been so long without female superintendence, they must needs require some looking to before they could be pronounced ready for the reception of any guest, far less such a one as Ella, who was accustomed to have everything so nice about her. Gracie had little pride, and less pretence, in her composition; but she was naturally desirous to make what domestic preparation she could for her friend. On the other hand, Ella besought her so piteously not to leave her even for a day to the companionship of her own thoughts, that she felt compelled to give way to her, and the two young women left town together.

The commissary himself happened to be engaged on some official duties at the hour of their arrival, so there was no one to welcome them. The first entrance into what had been her mother's home—though, alas! an unhappy one—was a trial for Gracie; she had pictured to herself the empty chair in the bow-window, and the little table on which, while her fingers could still obey her will, the invalid was wont to work. But a still sharper pain than she had apprehended seized her heart when she found that all these sad relics had disappeared. "Many men, many hearts," is as true a proverb as "Many men, many minds." It is impossible to decide for others on a question of the affections: whether it is better, for example, when one has lost some dear one, that all that belonged to him should be removed and kept out of sight, or whether they should be left, as usual, to in time become common things. The latter is, of course, the easier method, and it might therefore have been concluded that the commissary would have taken it. His enemies would have said that he could have borne the spectacle of these "trivial fond records" with considerable philosophy, and that it was not likely that he would take much trouble to spare his daughter's sensibilities. But in this case it seemed the good commissary was wronged. The house had been rearranged throughout, and, it must be con-

fessed, for the better. The mother-of-pearl glories of the drawing-room indeed remained; the "Abbey by Moonlight" on the sofa back, and "Windsor Castle by Night," on the conversation-chair, still gleamed with livid splendour; but the rest of the rooms had been refurnished, and not without some taste.

"Why, my dear Gracie, this is quite palatial!" said Ella, with a touch of the old sense of fun that had won Cecil's heart almost as much as her beauty. "Your father has actually gone in for art;" and indeed there was a picture of a ship at sea over the dining-room side-board, the gorgeous frame of which exacted involuntary homage from every eye.

"Yes," answered Gracie gravely. "I have no doubt papa has done it for the best; but it seems to me—just at first—that I should have preferred things to be as they were."

Ella felt she had struck a sad note, and was not sorry that at that moment her Uncle Gerard made his appearance. It relieved her from embarrassment as respected her friend, and, besides, she wished to have her meeting with the colonel independent of the commissary. Gracie guessed that she desired to be alone with him, and almost immediately left the room.

"Well, Ella, I am delighted to see you back at Woolwich, my dear, though I should have preferred receiving you under the old roof; but I have parted with the cottage, as you know, and gone back to barracks. Diogenes is in his tub again."

"I know it, my dear uncle. I hope you are all the happier for not having a self-willed niece to plague you?"

"No, Ella, I can't say that," returned he tenderly. "I miss you sadly. But what does it matter; a few more years, and then—why, damme, I shall have wings instead of epaulettes; I shall be an angel!"

Ella could not restrain a smile; she had not seen, or at all events heard, anybody so funny as the colonel for many a day. Yet perhaps the smile was forced, since he went on: "You look as beautiful as ever, but not so bright and gay. What is it, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing, uncle. I am a sober matron now, remember, and not the thoughtless girl you knew me."

"And more's the pity. I like thoughtless girls; and I am afraid it is only the thoughtless ones that like me."

The colonel sighed. It was a bad sign with him, when he sighed, and did not swear.

"When a man has reached my time of life," he continued, "the gout is his only companion; he must expect the blues, Ella. But you—you are still a child in years, and your face should show no care; yet care is there. What's wrong, my girl?"

"There is nothing absolutely wrong, uncle," answered she with a sudden flush; "nothing, at all events, that can be bettered by our talking about it."

"Does Landon treat you ill, Ella? I never liked him—damn the fellow!"

"Uncle Gerard, for shame!" cried she; "I will not listen to such words. You forget that Cecil is my husband?"

"So I did; I'll hold my tongue. I was only about to reiterate an opinion of mine, that you have heard me express before; so you will lose nothing. Only, if ever you want a friend—if any man should do you a wrong, Ella, husband or not—so help me Heaven I'll put a bullet through him!"

"You would do anything you could to serve me in your way, I know, uncle."

"Yes, anything in my way, Ella; or, for that matter, out of it, if you'll only show me how. Blood is thicker than water; and besides," added he hastily, struck doubtless by the remembrance of how very thin it was in certain cases, "I love you on your own account, niece."

"There have been great changes here," said Ella, pointing to the new furniture and the gorgeous marine picture: the colonel had found the ladies, as it happened, in the dining-room. "The commissary seems to have had a fit of extravagance which surprises me."

"He knows what he's about generally," observed the colonel with significance, "and he thinks he knows always; but we shall see."

"I don't understand you, my dear uncle."

"Why, it's the De Horsingham has done it all, or has caused him to do it. You have heard of the woman, of course?"

"The De Horsingham!" said Ella, looking both surprised and alarmed.

"What! don't you know? Oh! it's all right so far. The lady is a pillow of snow—I mean a pillar. But do you mean to say he has never mentioned her? Why, my dear girl, she has metamorphosed the

commissary. He has become quite a lady's man."

"She is the governess at the commandant's, is she not?" observed Ella, recalling, for the first time, what Mr. Whympster-Hobson had said of the lady on their way to the picnic. So many events—and such sad ones—had happened in the interim, that she had never given her another thought.

"Yes; but she is said to have some money of her own; to teach only because she likes young people; which a certain friend of ours, not given to credulity in a general way, has chosen to believe. She painted that picture of the ship in a storm herself, and he thinks it's a masterpiece. It's so far like, as I took the liberty of telling him, that it makes me sick to look at it; but he sticks to his own opinion."

"But do you mean to say, uncle, that this man—the commissary—is already thinking of marrying again?"

"I should say he thought of nothing else," answered the colonel coolly. "She is a fine woman, there is no doubt of that; and if she really has got money it is natural that he should be anxious not to let her slip through his fingers. I know what you would say, 'the funeral baked meats,' and so forth; indeed, I ventured upon that quotation myself, but he replied that Hamlet's mother only showed a wise economy. The commissary's independence of public opinion is, I have always maintained, a fine trait in his character; it rises to sublimity."

"I think he ought to rise to sublimity—with a rope round his neck," said Ella, with indignation.

"My friend, and your host—and be hanged to him, eh?" said the colonel, comically. "That is the female view of the case, no doubt; nine-tenths of the ladies here are agreed with you. On the other hand, if it is a compliment to a wife, as it undoubtedly is, that her hus-

band should marry again after her death, the sooner he does it the greater compliment he confers. The poor commissary as a widower is inconsolable; as a husband he hopes to be once more a happy man. What does it matter to anybody but himself and the De Horsingham?"

"I think it would matter a great deal to Gracie. It would be simply an outrage upon her mother's memory if her father married within the year."

"A year and a day, my dear Ella. If we are to be so very particular, let's have the thing correct. Now you astonish me—a clever sensible woman, and married too—in taking this conventional line. It is nothing to me, you know. If I have a wish in the matter, it is that my friend should not make a fool of himself, because the De Horsingham will, I know, object to my smoking in this room. But if I was he I should please myself."

"I am thankful to say you are not he, nor anything like him. But surely, Gracie knows nothing of this?"

"I can't say, but I should think not. You see her absence from home has been some sort of excuse to the poor commissary for going into society, and in fact for cultivating relations with the lady in question. And as you induced her to leave her home, you have yourself a share of the blame. Under the circumstances I think you should at least not interfere. Gracie is old enough to fight her own battles, should fighting be necessary. I really think a certain reticence is imposed upon you, at all events until you see the way the cat jumps—I mean how the De Horsingham behaves herself."

"Of course, I shall say nothing to Gracie, unless she speaks to me upon the matter."

"A very right conclusion, and arrived at in the very nick of time, dear Ella, for I see the gallant commissary coming through the square."

END OF THE SEVENTEENTH VOLUME.

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MANCHESTER-19 Brasenose Street

LIVERPOOL-25 Castle Street



THE CORPORATION OF THE

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION

No. 6 ST. ANDREW SQUARE EDINBURGH.

THIS OFFICE *ALONE* COMBINES THE ADVANTAGES OF
MUTUAL ASSURANCE WITH MODERATE PREMIUMS:

THE PREMIUMS are so moderate that at most ages an assurance of £1200 or £1250 may be secured from the first for the same yearly payment which would generally assure £1000.

The whole PROFITS go to the Policyholders, on a system at once safe, equitable, and favourable to good lives—no share being given to those by whose early death there is a *loss*. The effect of reserving the surplus for the survivors (who will, however, comprise more than half the members) has been that policies for £1000 have already been increased to £1400, £1600, and £1800. Some of the early policies have already been doubled.

The NEW BUSINESS of the last two years averaged a Million, and in all respects the Report for 1875 was most favourable.

The COST of MANAGEMENT is unusually low. Notwithstanding the large amount of NEW BUSINESS—in special connection with which so much of the outlay is necessarily incurred—the *Ratio* of Expenses in last year was only 8.4 per cent on its Receipts, or 11.5 per cent on the Premium Income. *The actual Expenses are greatly under those of any other Institution doing a like amount of New Business.*

The GROWTH OF THE FUNDS must after all be the best practical test of prosperity. "*The RATIO in which, for several years past, our Funds have increased, in proportion to our Income, has greatly exceeded that of any other Office in the Kingdom.*" The Increase in the past year was £230,000.

The Accumulated Funds now exceed £2,800,000.

A DIAGRAM (*prepared for the Chairman, Thos. Stevenson, C.E., F.R.S.E.*), showing the whole Receipts and Expenditure in each year, and the FUNDS at the end of each year—thus giving at a glance the history of the Institution from the commencement to the present time—may be had on application.

Full STATEMENTS of PRINCIPLES will be found in the ANNUAL REPORTS.

EDINBURGH, Jan. 1877.

JAMES WATSON, Manager.

BELFAST-22 Waring Street.

Scottish Provident Institution.

TABLE OF PREMIUMS, BY DIFFERENT MODES OF PAYMENT,
For Assurance of £100 at Death—With Profits.

Age next Birth-day.	Annual Premium payable during Life.	ANNUAL PREMIUM LIMITED TO			Single Payment.	Age next Birth-day.
		Twenty-one Payments.	Fourteen Payments.	Seven Payments.		
21	£1 16 3	£2 10 6	£3 4 11	£5 10 0	£33 0 1	21
22	1 16 9	2 11 0	3 5 9	5 11 0	33 5 10	22
23	1 17 2	2 11 6	3 6 5	5 12 1	33 11 2	23
24	1 17 7	2 12 1	3 6 11	5 13 1	33 16 5	24
25	1 18 0	2 12 6	3 7 3	5 14 0	34 2 0	25
26	1 18 6	2 13 0	3 7 10	5 14 11	34 8 2	26
27	1 19 2	2 13 6	3 8 7	5 15 11	34 16 1	27
28	1 19 11	2 14 1	3 9 5	5 17 1	35 4 9	28
29	2 0 8	2 14 8	3 10 3	5 18 6	35 14 1	29
*30	2 1 6	2 15 4	3 11 2	6 0 1	36 4 0	*30
31	2 2 6	2 16 2	3 12 1	6 1 10	36 14 6	31
32	2 3 5	2 17 1	3 13 2	6 3 8	37 5 5	32
33	2 4 6	2 18 0	3 14 4	6 5 8	37 17 2	33
34	2 5 7	2 19 0	3 15 7	6 7 9	38 9 7	34
35	2 6 10	3 0 2	3 16 11	6 10 0	39 2 9	35
36	2 8 2	3 1 5	3 18 4	6 12 5	39 16 11	36
37	2 9 8	3 2 9	3 19 11	6 15 0	40 12 4	37
38	2 11 3	3 4 3	4 1 7	6 17 9	41 8 7	38
39	2 12 11	3 5 9	4 3 4	7 0 7	42 5 4	39
†40	2 14 9	3 7 5	4 5 2	7 3 7	43 2 10	†40
41	2 16 8	3 9 2	4 7 2	7 6 8	44 0 11	41
42	2 18 8	3 11 1	4 9 3	7 9 11	44 19 9	42
43	3 0 11	3 13 1	4 11 5	7 13 3	45 19 3	43
44	3 3 3	3 15 3	4 13 10	7 16 9	46 19 7	44
45	3 5 9	3 17 6	4 16 4	8 0 7	48 0 8	45
46	3 8 5	4 0 0	4 19 1	8 4 6	49 2 8	46
47	3 11 5	4 2 8	5 2 1	8 8 8	50 5 8	47
48	3 14 8	4 5 8	5 5 4	8 13 2	51 9 7	48
49	3 18 1	4 8 9	5 8 9	8 17 11	52 14 1	49
50	4 1 7	4 12 1	5 12 4	9 2 10	53 19 3	50
51	4 5 6	4 15 5	5 16 1	9 7 11	55 4 5	51
52	4 9 5	4 18 10	5 19 11	9 13 1	56 9 0	52
53	4 13 5	5 2 5	6 3 11	9 18 3	57 12 11	53
54	4 17 8	5 6 3	6 8 0	10 3 5	58 17 2	54
55	5 1 11	5 10 2	6 12 1	10 8 6	60 0 8	55
56	5 6 4	.....	6 14 9	10 13 7	61 3 8	56
57	5 10 11	.....	6 18 8	10 18 8	62 6 5	57
58	5 15 9	.....	7 2 9	11 3 10	63 9 4	58
59	6 1 0	.....	7 7 3	11 9 0	64 12 11	59
60	6 6 7	.....	7 12 0	11 14 3	65 16 9	60

[These Rates are about as low as the usual non-participating Rates.]

* A person of 30 may thus secure £1000 at Death, by a yearly payment, during life, of £20:15s. This Premium, if paid to any other of the Scottish Mutual Offices, would secure £900 only, instead of £1000.

OR, if unwilling to burden himself with payments during his whole life, he may secure the same sum of £1000 by twenty-one yearly payments of £27:13:4—being thus free of payment after age 50.

† At age 40 the Premium ceasing at age 60, is, for £1000, £33:14:2, being about the same as most Offices require to be paid during the whole term of life.

DUBLIN OFFICE—16 COLLEGE GREEN.

BRISTOL—St. Stephen's Avenue.

LEEDS—Royal Exchange.

DUNDEE—30 Meadowside.

NEWCASTLE—26 Market Street.

THE

PROVIDENT LIFE OFFICE.

FOUNDED 1806.

BRANCH OFFICES:

CITY,

14, Cornhill, E.C.

EDINBURGH,

75, George Street.

DUBLIN,

113, Grafton Street.

LIVERPOOL,

3, Whitechapel, Lord St.

MANCHESTER,

68, Fountain Street.

BIRMINGHAM,

20, Colmore Row.

LEEDS,

9, East Parade.

BRISTOL,

38, College Green.

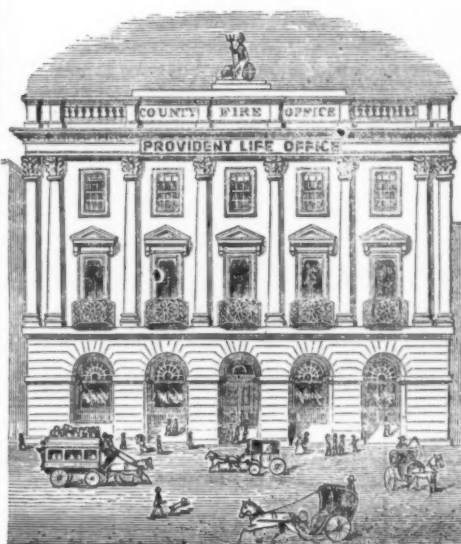
EXETER,

Queen Street.

CANTERBURY,

32, St. George's Street.

HEAD OFFICE:



50, REGENT STREET,
LONDON.

INVESTED FUNDS	£1,996,622.
ANNUAL INCOME.....	£252,614.
CLAIMS PAID	£5,726,839.
BONUSES DECLARED	£2,042,155.

FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS SEE BACK.

THE PROVIDENT LIFE OFFICE

Was founded in the year 1806, and has during 70 years pursued an uninterrupted career of prosperity. At the present time it has Invested Funds, £1,996,622, and an Annual Income of £252,614.

PROFITS.

The next Division will take place in May, 1878. Policies effected before the 1st January, 1878, will be entitled to share in this Division.

In the *PROVIDENT*, a Bonus immediately it is declared becomes absolute property. Bonuses to the amount of £2,042,155 have already been declared.

EXAMPLES OF BONUSES UPON POLICIES STILL IN EXISTENCE.

No. of Policy.	Date of Policy.	Sum Assured.	Policy increased by Bonuses to			Percentage of Bonus to Sum Assured.
			£	s.	d.	
3,924	1821	5,000	12,000	7	0	140 per cent.
6,616	1828	4,000	8,855	17	0	121 "
3,217	1819	500	1,071	0	4	114 "

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES UPON WHICH NO PREMIUMS ARE PAYABLE,

The yearly payments having been extinguished by the application of part of the Bonus to that purpose :—

No. of Policy.	Date of Policy.	Sum Assured.	Premium Payable.	Sum now Payable.		
				£	s.	d.
8,595	1834	3,000	Nil.	4,346	0	0
6,004	1826	1,000	"	1,443	8	9
9,195	1836	500	"	661	0	0

NOTE.—The foregoing Policies will continue to be increased annually till death.

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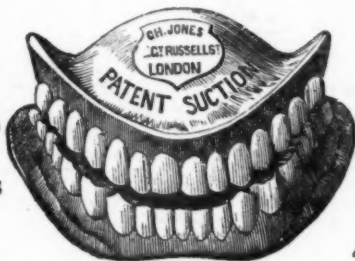
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WHEN THE SHIP COMES HOME.

CHAPTER I. RELEASE.

A CONVICT! That is what I was in the year 1851—a convict, with a sentence on my head of twenty years' penal servitude, fifteen of them still to elapse, for forgery and embezzlement, the crime having been committed under circumstances (as the judge remarked) of the most revolting and exaggerated ingratitude—a convict in New South Wales.

It seemed to me at the time, and it seems to me still, but a small thing for which I received a remission of the unfinished term of years, compared with the thing for which I was found guilty and received my sentence. There was a rising, a sudden and purposeless rising, among the convicts, and, at a critical moment, Heaven in its mercy put into my head to do what they called an heroic deed. It saved the lives, they said, of the governor and one or two prison-warders, and it gave me my freedom. Let us say no more about it.

My freedom! What did that mean to me? Let me try, bitter as is the recollection of that time, to recall something of what it meant, something of what my prison-life had been.

I was in prison for five years and three months. When my servitude began, I used to lie sleepless at night; sometimes stupidly wondering; sometimes moaning in agony of misery; sometimes praying for swift and speedy death; sometimes asking bitterly if prayer were any use, if there

was anyone at all to hear and pity outside the white stone wall; sometimes meditating on some possible mode of suicide to end it all—because, you see, I was innocent.

At the beginning of my imprisonment, when I slept, my thoughts would fly back to the happy days of liberty. I saw myself at school; I was visiting my patron, master, and benefactor, Mr. Baldwin, to whom my dead father had been a faithful and trusted servant. He questioned me, according to his wont, on my progress in the classes; he patted me on the head when I showed him my prizes; and when, at sixteen, he took me away from the school, where he had paid for my education, it was to give me a desk in his counting-house, with the promise of advancement should I deserve it. As the years went on, I saw myself pushed up with as much rapidity as was fair to others. Responsible work was put into my hands. At twenty I enjoyed such confidence as the head of a great City house could bestow on a young clerk, and I was allowed such a salary that I could live comfortably, and have my little sister Ruth—my only sister—to live with me. When my dreams reached this point I generally awoke with a start and a rush of thoughts, confused at first, but swiftly resolving themselves into the ghastly truth. For then followed the dreadful end—my good old master in the witness-box, telling, with sobs of a broken voice, how he had loved and trusted me; the immediate and unanimous finding of the verdict; the voice of the judge—cold, stern, never to be forgotten—stating that, in the face of

the facts before him, he must make a signal example of as black a case as had ever been revealed in a court of justice. The sentence of the court would be twenty years of penal servitude. And after that my little Ruth—oh! my pretty, innocent, helpless little sister of ten—weeping before me, when she came to take her leave of me, and I not able to do anything—not the least single thing—not able to say any word, not the least single word of comfort—too miserable even to assert my innocence! I cannot bear even now to think about it. For I was innocent.

After a few months of prison-life I left off dreaming of the past. Then the present was with me, night and day—a present without joy, hope, or uncertainty; a present without pain, shame, or suffering, save for the leaden weight of degradation which never leaves a prisoner. Yet no open sense of disgrace, because there were none to look in my face and shame me with a glance. You do not feel disgrace before a warder or an official, and yet the shame is that part of the punishment which the judge always forgets; it comes after the sentence is worked out. There was no suffering, because the day's work brought the night's fatigue, and there was no one at fall of evening in my solitary cell to keep me awake with reproaches; but always that heavy load upon the brain, and the present, monotonous and dreadful as it was, with me night and day. I ceased in a very few months to think, to feel, to look forward. I became a machine; even the thought of my innocence died out of me by degrees. I supposed that, somehow, I must have done it—perhaps in madness, perhaps in a dream; or rather I accepted the present, and forgot the past. I even forgot poor little Ruth, and ceased to wonder what had become of her; I forgot what I had been. I was a convict; there was nothing before me but prison all my life.

The seasons rolled on; the bright sun overhead beat down upon the bare prison yards; the moonlight streamed through the bars of my window. Summer followed winter, and was followed by winter again. Outside the prison, the world went on in its quiet colonial way. No doubt, within a stone's throw of my cell, women were wooed, children were born; there were rejoicings and thanksgivings in families, with mirth of boys and girls, and smiles of mothers. Inside, I for one thought no more of such things as love and happiness; I thought of nothing. But

for one happy change in my work, I think I should have drifted downwards slowly into that dismal slough of stupid madness, once plunged in which the patient can no longer think of anything, not even his own sorrowful life, or do anything, save sit and watch vacuously the hands of the prison-clock creep round, the shadows shift across the stone floor, and the white-wash grow dull as the night creeps through the bars. That change came when I had been at Sydney a twelve-month. They put me, because I was well-educated and intelligent, into the apothecary's room. There were a few medical books of reference, which I was allowed in the intervals of work to read. And so by degrees, a new interest was awakened in my brain, and in a draggled, broken-winged fashion, I began to live again. What I read in the day I thought over at night, until I knew all that the books had to teach me. The doctor brought more books, and I read them, and he taught me things not to be learned in books. Thus I became in some sort a physician and a surgeon. Once, when I showed the doctor what I knew, he startled me into long-forgotten hope. "When your time is out," said he, "you might become an apothecary, they always want them in the coolie ships."

Time out! I felt a sudden giddiness, as the blood rushed to my head. Time out! Ah! When? For there were fifteen years yet to serve; and even with a ticket-of-leave there were nine years before me. Twenty years of age when I was sentenced; twenty-five when the doctor spoke those kindly words of forecast; I might be forty before my release could be counted on, for they are hard on forgers. What sort of life was there beyond that fortieth year, for a man who has to begin over again, and carry such a burden of disgrace as mine.

Enough about the convict-time. I received in due course a full remission of the remaining period. When I came away, the governor offered to shake hands with me, because he said I was a brave man. I asked him to shake hands with me because I was an innocent man, and he shook his head; then I thanked him, but refused to take the proffered hand. For the sense of my innocence came back to me, strong and clear, on the morning of my release. Then the chaplain rebuked me, and rightly. Why should the governor—why should anyone—believe me inno-

cent? Only the doctor stood my friend. "I have read your case," he said, "and it's the clearest case I ever did read; either you are the forger or the devil; and since you have worked for me, Warneford, I believe upon my honour that it was the devil. But no one else will ever believe that. Good-bye, my lad, and God prosper you." So that I had my little mite of comfort. In all this great world there was one man who thought my assertions true. Stay—there was another man; one who not only believed, but knew me innocent. The man who did it. But who was he? For I had no enemy in the world, and there was no one whom I could even reasonably suspect.

I left the prison with an angry heart when I ought to have been most grateful, for I realised more bitterly when I breathed the free air again, that, for the rest of my miserable life, I was to be a marked man. Go where I would, fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, there was no spot so retired, no place so remote, but that some echo of the past might visit it, breathing my name and my story; there would be no moment when I should feel safe from the fear that some finger might reach forth from the crowd, and point me out as Warneford the Forger—Warneford the Convict. Why, the governor said that the papers were ringing with my "heroic deed." So much the worse for me, because it would make concealment more difficult. Grateful? Why should I be grateful, I asked, for being delivered from an unjust bondage, with the stigma of dishonour branded on my brow, plain for all men to read? Time enough to think of gratitude, when I could plead before the world a proved and manifest innocence.

The city of Sydney in those days was a quiet and peaceful place, not on the way to get rich, and with little to talk about. They wanted to make much of me and my exploit; offers of employment came in; people reasoned with me that, if I stayed there, I should certainly get on; they pointed out other men who had worked their term, and stayed in the settlement, and were now flourishing and respected citizens. But I could not stay; there was no rest possible for me till I was back in London. I wanted to see the old place again. I thought if I could have a quiet three months on board a ship, I could put things together in my mind better than I could do in the prison, and perhaps get a clue. Because, you see, I

never had been able, from the very beginning, to put things clearly to myself. Before the trial, I had but one thing to say—I did not do it; of that alone I was certain. When my case came on, I stood like one in a dream, while the circumstantial evidence piled itself up, and even my counsel could find nothing to say for me. After the sentence, I was as a man who is stunned.

And then another thought came over me as I stood outside the prison-wall, a thought which should have softened any heart—the thought of little Ruth. She was ten years old when I left her—fifteen now. What was become of her? It had been my earnest wish that I might bring her up to be a gentlewoman like her mother before her—a sweet Christian maid as her dead mother was before her—and strong in goodness, as her dead father had been. Now—what had become of her? And whose fault—whose fault? It was mocking grace of sunshine and sweetness of spring, it was bitterness of beauty in flowers and tender grasses wet with dew, that I saw for the first time for many years. The free air that I felt around me could bring no salve or comfort to a ruined life; it could not drive away the thought of another whose wreck was due to my own.

So the freedom which was restored to me threatened to become a curse, and, with angry heart, I shook off the Sydney dust from my feet, and started for Melbourne. I would go there; I had a little money, which I had earned by my apothecary work. I would take the cheapest passage home under another name; it might be that no one would know that a convict was on board, and so I could sit quietly during a long three-months' voyage and think. Just then I could not think clearly, because I was mad and blind with reawakened rage; and, in my bitterness, I cursed the day that gave me birth. A convict released before his time! Why, if people looked at me, I knew in my heart that they were saying, "That is George Warneford, the famous forger, let off for courage in the mutiny. But anyone can see that he is a convict; that is apparent from his face." "And whose fault?" I cried in my blind anguish; "whose fault?"

As I strode along the faintly-worn tracks and silent paths of that lonely country, there grew up in me a purpose and a hope. The purpose was to hide myself

when I arrived in England—to get, if possible, some sort of occupation which would leave my evenings free for thought, and to devote all that thought to the steady following up of every clue that might present itself. My hope was to stand one day before the world—my prisoner in one hand, my proofs in the other—and demand revenge.

And all that follows is the history of how this purpose got itself carried out, in what manner my hope was achieved, and what sort of revenge I perpetrated at last.

CHAPTER II. "MURDER ON BOARD!"

I WORKED my way to Melbourne on foot, hoarding my money, as if in some vague way it was going to assist me in my purpose. Heaven help me with my purpose! In the morning I was resolute and confident. I would get back to London; on the voyage I would set down all that I could remember, to the smallest detail—every little fact of that happy, bygone time before this evil thing fell upon me. No doubt I should find a clue at last; somehow I would follow it up, step by step, till my proofs accumulated to irresistible evidence. I pictured myself, under the glamour of that bright sunshine of Australia, standing before the prosperous devil who had done the deed—he was always prosperous and happy in my dreams—and dragging him before justice. I was myself standing before the old man—my benefactor—denouncing his readiness to believe, his unrelenting persecution when he did believe; always hurrying onwards a full and complete revenge, till not one of those who had had a hand in my unmerited ruin, should remain without his share of a cup of bitterness.

In the night I saw things in their grim reality; I saw how weak I was; I saw the hopelessness of my task; and I foresaw how I was to creep back to my native country, pardoned, it is true, for good conduct, but branded till death with the gallows-tree mark of forger and thief. And at such a time I was willing to go back to my prison, and serve out the rest of my life in the apothecary's-room.

Lurid hope that seemed golden, or dark despair, it mattered nothing, because, in hope or despair, my miserable life was before me—life stretches long before the eyes at twenty-five—and it had to be got through somehow.

Always, in those days, the thought of myself and my wrongs! The wrong was

so great, the ruin so overwhelming, that there was no room left in my mind for any other feeling. For instance, I arrived in the colony of Victoria in the days when the whisper of gold was running like wild-fire through its scattered hamlets, and along its giant sheep-runs; but when other men's nerves thrilled at the chance of boundless wealth waiting to be picked up, I listened coldly. Again, to this day I have no sense or recollection of what the country was like through which I toiled alone, from station to station, in my resolution to get to the place where my face at least, if not my name, should be unknown. I know I walked through wild and savage districts, where there were dangers of thirst, dangers of reptiles, and dangers of treacherous natives. I believe that I sometimes slept out for days together. I know that I was always alone, except that sometimes a friendly shepherd in an up-country station gave me tea and damper. What it was like, that great continent through which I journeyed on foot, I cannot say, because I walked along with open eyes which saw not, ears which never heard, and senses which never felt anything. Only, as I said before, the light and sunshine witched me into confidence, which the darkness tore away. And the agony was like the agony of Prometheus when the eagle tore away his liver.

I think in those days I must have been mad, for, if I had not been mad, I must have known that there was still one heart, somewhere in England, beating with love for me, one voice going up in prayer for me day and night. But, if I thought of Ruth at all, it was to remember how my ruin was hers, and it made me more fiercely mad.

It was not difficult at Melbourne to get a ship bound for London. The harbour was full of ships, whose crews had deserted and gone off to the gold-fields. Now and then the captains had deserted their ships as well. They all seemed bound for London, because the port of Melbourne was then a very little place, and its trade was small; the trouble was that there were no crews to carry back the ships. I had to cast about and wait. I was the only man, I believe, in all that colony who neither looked to find gold for himself in the diggings, nor tried to make money out of those who were starting for the diggings.

After a few weeks of restless waiting—each day that kept me from a visionary revenge was a day lost—I discovered that

a vessel would probably sail immediately. I got this information, in an indirect way, from a man whose business it was to plunder the diggers at starting. He was a great scoundrel, I remember, and I used to compare him piling up money hand over hand by dishonest tricks and cheatings, with myself, the released felon of a blameless life. He asked me no questions, either where I was from or whither I was going. He took the money for my board, and he bade me hold myself in readiness for a start; and one day I got the word and went on board the clipper sailing vessel, Lucy Derrick, bound from Melbourne to London. I was a steerage passenger, the only one, because no other poor man in his senses would leave Melbourne at such a time. There was only one saloon passenger, and she was a young lady; of course no one but a lady would leave Melbourne when the very air was dry with thirst for gold. She was under the charge, I learned, of the captain, and was sent home in order that her father, a lawyer by profession, might go up to Ballarat and make his fortune in the gold-fields.

The captain was a gray-headed man of sixty-five or so, a man with a face scarred and scored in a thousand lines. It was a hard and stern face. This was well, because he had hard, stern work before him. The chief officer, a young fellow of five-and-twenty, on the contrary, showed in his face, which was mild and soft-eyed, that he was not the man to command a crew of roughs and rowdies.

I say nothing against him, and in the end he fought it out to the death. There were a second and third mate too—one was a boy of sixteen, not yet out of his articles, the other was a rough, trusty fellow, every inch a sailor. As for the saloon passenger—she was to be my queen and mistress. Helen Elwood was her name. Her father brought her on board half an hour after I embarked, and took a hasty leave of her. I noticed neither him nor her, because, in truth, I was still dazed by the long dream, in which I had walked all the way from Sydney to Melbourne—my dream of a purpose. I sat in the bows, with my bundle beside me, hardly noted when the anchor was weighed, and presently the ship spread her white sails, and we slipped away out to sea.

Then I began to look about me. The first thing I noticed was that the men were drunk; and I learned afterwards that if

they had not been drunk they would not have been got on board at all. Then I saw the captain and officers drive them to work with blows. The men were like brute beasts, but I never saw brute beasts so knocked down and belaboured; they were drunk, but they understood enough to turn round when the officer was past, and swear savagely. On the quarter-deck, clinging to the taff-rail, and gazing at the receding shores, was the young lady, all alone. At the wheel stood a man with his legs wide apart, his eyes screwed up, and his head on one side; he was an oldish man. I put him down as the quartermaster or boatswain, and I was right. Every now and then he jerked his head in the direction of the young lady, and I knew that he was encouraging her, but of course I could not hear what he said, if, indeed, he did say anything.

All that first day the captain and the officers drove and ordered the men about, as if they had been so many negro slaves. When night fell things were a little ship-shape, and the men seemed gradually coming round. When I turned in the watch was set, and though neither the captain nor the chief officer left the deck, it was manifest that some sort of order was established, and that the captain meant to have things his way.

His own way it was for a month or more.

I suppose there was never got together, since ships first began to sail the ocean, a crew so utterly blackguard as the crew of the Lucy Derrick. As a steerage passenger my place was forward, and I sat all day close to the fore-castle, listening perforce to the oaths with which they interlarded their language, and the stories they told. Now, as an ex-convict returning from Sydney, there ought to have been nothing in the whole scale of human wickedness unfamiliar to me. Truth to say there was very little. He who has been in a convict-ship, and has made the dismal voyage across the ocean with Her Majesty's felons, has had every opportunity of learning what a hell might be made of this fair earth, if men had their own wicked way. Somehow it might have been that my abject misery at the time blinded my eyes, and stopped my ears. The voyage, with its sufferings by night, its despair by day, and the horror of my companionship, was all forgotten; so that, as I lay upon the deck, the imprecations and foul language of the crew of the Lucy

Derrick, as they got together on the fore-castle, awakened me from that stupor of thought into which I was fallen, as some unexpected noise at night falls upon the ears of an uneasy dreamer, and awakens him to reality. No one in the ship said anything to me, or took any notice of me. "It is because I am a convict," I whispered to myself. It was not. It was only because no one took the trouble to ascertain who and what the only steerage passenger was. I took my meals with the second and third mates, and we exchanged little conversation. I suppose they thought I was sally. Between meals I went on deck, and stayed there; and for want of anything to do looked about me, and watched the men.

In a few weeks after leaving land I became aware of several significant things. The first was that the officers never went forward alone, and that they were always armed; then that they were gloomy, and seemed to be watching the men. I noticed too—being, so to speak, among the sailors—that they whispered together a good deal. Among them was a young fellow of five-and-twenty or so, who seemed the leader in the whisperings. He never passed another sailor without saying something in a low voice; and when he passed me, he had a way, which exasperated me, of grinning and nodding. He was a smooth-faced man, with what seemed at first to be an upward twist of the right lip. This, which was the scar of a knife-wound, caught probably in some midnight broil, gave him a sinister appearance. His eyes were close together, and bright; his forehead was high, but receding; and he looked, in spite of his sea-going dress, less like a sailor than any man I ever saw afloat. Yet he was handy aloft, or on deck; and I have seen him on a windy day astride on the end of a yard, marline-spike in hand, doing his work as fearlessly and as well as the best of them. Whatever the men whispered together, I made up my mind that this fellow was the leader; and I read, out of my convict experience, in his face, that he was as reckless a ruffian as ever shook an unchained leg outside a gaol. Other things I noticed. The boatswain, who at first seemed to spend his whole time at the wheel, sometimes gave up his post to the fourth officer, and came forward. Then there were no whisperings; but the men kept aloof from him, all but Boston Tom, which was the name of the smooth-cheeked villain. Boston

Tom always spoke to him, and spoke him fair, addressing him as "Mister Croil." Ben Croil, as I afterwards learned to call him, was a man of five-and-fifty or sixty years of age; short of stature, thin and wiry; his hair cropped close, and quite gray; his face covered all over with crows'-feet; his eyes, which he had a trick of shutting up one after the other while he looked at you, of a curiously pale and delicate blue. As a young man, Ben Croil must have been singularly handsome, as indeed he was proud of telling. In his age he had a face which you trusted; and as for his mind—but we shall come to old Ben's inner-self presently. For his sake I love and respect the race of boatswains, quartermasters, and non-commissioned officers generally of Her Majesty's navy, and of all the ships, steamers, and ocean-craft afloat. For if Merchant Jack is rude and rough, drunken and disreputable, his immediate superior is, as a rule, steady as a lion, temperate as a Newfoundland dog, and as true as the queen of my heart.

There was a ship's boy on board—there always is. I have heard it stated that the bodies of ships' boys are inhabited by the souls of those who were once cruel ships' captains; other people think that they are possessed by the souls of ships' provisioners, ships' outfitters, pursers, navy agents, and crimps. I do not know which is the true theory. Both sides agree that the lot of all ships' boys is miserable, that none of them ever arrive at years of maturity, and that their sufferings, while in the flesh for the second time, are regulated by the evil they wrought in their former lives. Our boy was a curly-headed youngster of twelve; not a nice boy to look at, because he never washed, and was ignorant of a comb. I soon found out that he not only knew what was going on in the fore-castle, but that he went aft, and told the boatswain everything he knew; so one day I got that boy alone, while he was coiling some rope, and I said to him: "Dan, tell Mr. Croil that he may depend upon me. I know what you pretend to be so busy at the wheel for; I guess what you tell him; and I have seen you listening among the men. You tell Mr. Croil that he may depend upon me if he wants me." The boy fell to trembling all over, and he looked round carefully to see if any of the men were within hearing. As there was no one, he told me in a quick, hurried way, that if he was found out he would be murdered; that there was a plot

among the men, headed by Boston Tom; and that he told everything—that is, as much as he could learn—to the boatswain. Also that the men knew perfectly well that the captain and the officers were all armed to the teeth; but that they were waiting for an opportunity, and would make or find one before long, for they were all mad to be back at the gold-fields.

Now this information, which corroborated my suspicions, served to rouse me altogether from my brooding, and I began to think what a selfish, heartless creature I must be to sit in the corner, and mope over my own misfortunes, when there was this danger hanging over ship and cargo. And being, as one may say, wide-awake again, of course I remembered the young lady we had on board; and my heart grew mad to think of her falling into the hands of Boston Tom and his gang of ruffians. So I was glad to think I had sent that message, and resolved to do my own duty. However, there was nothing to do just then but to wait until I should have a message from the boatswain; so I sat in my usual place and waited.

The boy took my message, but no answer came that day at all. In the night a strange thing happened. It was fair-weather sailing, with the trade-wind blowing nearly aft, so that all sails were set, and the ship slipped through the water without so much as rolling. I was sound asleep in my bunk, when I heard voices, as it seemed, in my ear. They were brought to me, I am sure, by a special act of Providence, for I never could understand, otherwise, how I managed to hear them. First, there fell a faint buzzing on my ear, which I, being drowsy and heavy to sleep, did not much listen to; then I heard words plain, and I listened; the conversation came to me in bits, but I made out enough. It was evident that the crew intended to mutiny—to choose the very next night, as I gathered (but I was wrong) for their purpose; and to carry the ship back to Australia, when they would scuttle her, and land as near the gold-fields as possible. Once there they would separate; and so, every man for himself. And then I heard my own name mentioned, but I could not hear what was to be done with me. After that the voices were silent, and I lay awake thinking what to do next. Now this sort of talk was not likely to make me sleep, therefore I got up, dressed quickly, and was ready, as well as broad awake, when, half an hour later, just after one in the morn-

ing, I heard steps and a whispering of men outside the door of my cabin, which was unlocked. "I'll do it at once," I heard a voice say, which I thought I knew for that of Boston Tom. "I will do it at once; and if anybody asks after him, say he must have fallen overboard. Where's the spike?" One of the two went away; I heard his bare feet on the boards. I stepped lightly out of the bunk, and put my hand upon my knife—such a knife as diggers and up-country men used to carry—a knife that would do for any purpose; at all events I would sell my life as dearly as I could. The door opened, and I slipped to the side of the cabin, which, as in most old-fashioned sailing-ships, was of a good size, though, of course, not a state cabin. I could feel the breath of the murderer, as he pushed his head in, and called me. It was afterwards that I remembered how strange a thing it was that he should know my real name, because I had shipped under another. "You, Warneford," he said, in a hoarse voice, "get up and come on deck. Wake up, do you hear? Come out, forging convict, and see the captain. Sulkin', are you? Then this will wake you up." I heard a blow—two blows—on the pillows of the bunk, and stepping swiftly behind him, I found myself on the forward companion in total darkness. I knew where I was, however, and the way. As quick as thought I ran up the ladder and over the deck, breathing more freely. Here I was safe, because it was not the watch of the men below, and at least there were three hours left for consideration.

There was nothing unusual in my appearance on deck at night. The air was hot and oppressive below; on deck it was cool. I had often stretched myself on such nights on the tarpaulins, and slept as soundly upon them as in my cabin; no one among the conspirators would think it strange to find me thus. Presently I pulled myself together a bit, and made up my mind, things being as they were, to go straight to the officer of the watch. He was walking up and down, a boatswain's whistle hanging round his neck. When he saw me, he held it in readiness.

"Murder on board, sir," I reported as calmly as I could.

"Ay, ay," he replied. "Very like; go aft and see the bo's'n."

It was a strange reply, but I understood, later on, that it had been already resolved to accept my services, and to

trust me with firearms. So when I went aft, the boatswain pulled out a revolver, a knife, and some ammunition, which he had ready for me.

"There," he said, "do your duty by the ship, young fellow; we shall want you to-morrow night belike, or maybe sooner. But go below and turn in."

This I would not do. I waited for the officer, and begged him to listen to me again, while I told him my story.

"I take it, sir," said the boatswain, "that they may try it on to-night. It isn't a bad dodge, you see, to get the day altered a bit in case of treachery; and if you'll allow me, sir, I'll tell off the passenger for the young lady."

"Six pistols against twenty-five men," said the officer. "I think we can fight it out without waking the young lady."

But the boatswain urged that he had got everything ready for her; that she would be frightened down below, and might come up on deck in the thick of the fight, and get harmed; so that it was finally resolved to awaken her, and bring her up on deck.

"Now, mister," said the boatswain to me, "you look like a man who's got his eyes open, and his head set on right end up; you listen to me. When the young lady comes on deck, I shall put her in this boat." There was a gig hanging to the stern davits; these were turned round in readiness for the boat to be lowered. "If things go wrong, as they will sometimes go wrong in this world's gear, lower away" (he showed me the rope) "and sling yourself in after her; then, if no one else comes, cut her adrift, because we shall be dead. When I whistle, or the chief officer whistles, don't wait, not even for a parting shot, but lower yourself away with her, and take your chance."

The prospect of a fight steadied my nerves, and, after a careful examination of the rope, on which all might depend, and looking to my revolver, which was fully loaded and capped, I began to feel excited.

All this took time, the fourth officer was giving orders to the men on watch, which prevented them noticing me talk at the wheel; and it struck six bells, which was three o'clock in the morning, when I saw the young lady dressed, and on the deck.

"What is it?" she asked; "tell me what is wrong, Mr. Croil."

"Be brave, young lady," he said; "nothing is wrong, I hope, but plenty may be. Here's the captain."

I noticed the captain's stern face as he came slowly aft, and I thought that, if the attack was made that night, some lives might be sent to a sudden reckoning. He was as steady as a rock.

"Miss Elwood," he said, "we expect a little mutiny, and we are quite ready for it; but we have asked you on deck to keep you as safe as possible. They have got no firearms, but we may have an ugly tussle. Let me help you into the boat—so. There are rugs and wraps, and you must make yourself as cosy as possible. To-morrow morning, if we get safely through the night, we will have them in irons; but if they try it on to-night, we must fight them."

The young lady obeyed with a shudder, but said no word. Then the captain looked round. The chief officer, with the third officer, was forward; with himself was the second mate, and behind him was the boatswain, steering the ship.

"How's her head, bo's'n?"

"Nor'-west by west, sir."

"And the trade straight as a line; the ship may navigate herself for half an hour. What's that, for'ard?" he asked, pointing.

"Mutineers," said the boatswain, quietly.

"Steady all," said the captain. "You, sir"—he turned to me—"remember your post."

In the dim twilight of the starlit night, for the moon was down, I saw creeping up the companion for'ard, one, two, three, half-a-dozen black forms. With the others I watched and waited, my pulse beating quicker, but my nerves, I think, steady. Then there was a shout and a rush. We heard the crack, crack of the pistols of the two officers forward, and we saw them retreating before the twenty desperadoes, who, armed with knives stuck on sticks, marline-spikes, and hatchets, pressed onwards, with a roar, like so many escaped devils. The boatswain pushed me back as I made a movement with the captain.

"To your place, sir," he said, "and remember the whistle;" but I fired my pistol once—for in the darkness I saw a figure creeping under the shade of the taffrail towards the helm. Perhaps it might be the leader, Boston Tom; but I could not see. I fired and he dropped; a moment after I heard the whistle of the boatswain. In an instant I let go the rope, and the boat dropped swiftly into the water.

In all my life I shall never forget that scene on the deck which I caught as I sprang over the side, and lowered myself,

hand over hand, into the boat. The pistol-shots were silent now, and it seemed as if, with a mighty stamping and mad shouting, there were a dozen figures fighting one, while the battle raged over the agonised forms of the dying and the dead. Like a photograph the image was painted on my brain, and has remained there ever since. Sometimes still, after all these years, I awaken at night to hear the cries and oaths of the sailors, the crack of the captain's pistols, and to reproach myself for not having done more to save the ship. But I did my duty.

The young lady was crouched, trembling, in the stern of the boat. I reassured her with a word—there was no time for more, for almost as soon as I reached the boat another form came hand over hand down the rope, and I sprang up, pistol in hand, to meet him. But it was the boatswain; he had a knife, as he descended, between his teeth, and he held the rope for a moment in his hand. Half-a-dozen faces appeared in the blackness peering over the taffrail at him. The night air was heavy with oaths, shrieks, and groans. "Villains, murderers, cut-throats!" he cried; "you shall be hanged, every mother's son. I know your names—I've got your record in my pocket." He severed the rope with a dexterous sweep of his knife; instantly the great ship seemed half a mile ahead of us, as she slipped through the water before the strong trade-wind. The boatswain shook his fist at her, as if the men on board could see and hear.

"There goes the Lucy Derrick," he said, "as sweet a clipper as ever sailed the seas, lost through a crew of mutineering, cut-throat villains. They shall hang, every one—that's settled—they shall all hang, if I hunt them round the world."

"Where are the officers?" I asked.

"Brained, all of them—knocked on the head, and murdered. There, my pretty—there, don't cry—don't take on. If the captain's gone, he died in defence of his ship—gone to heaven the captain is, with his three officers. In heaven, this minute. They've no call to be ashamed or afraid. Done their duty like men. No call; else what good expecting of a man to do his duty? And as for us, we've got a tight little craft, in the track of the clipper ships, or near it, with a supply of provisions and water, and plenty of room on this broad ocean, in case bad weather comes on. Now, mister—what's your name, sir?"

"My name is Warneford."

"Good, sir. You'll allow me to command this craft, if you please, through my being bred to the trade—not a gentleman, like you."

"Yes; but perhaps I am not a gentleman," I replied.

"Then you are a brave man!" cried the girl. "I watched you from the boat. I saw you shoot that man creeping along on the deck like a snake. And I owe my life to you, and to Mr. Croil. But, oh! it seems a poor and selfish thing to thank God for our lives, with all those good men murdered."

"Look!" cried Ben—I shall call him Ben for the future—"they're 'bout ship, the lubbers! Who'll teach them to navigate the vessel? Well, they can't sail over us, that's one comfort."

It was too dark for me to see more than the shape of the ship herself, standing out a black mass, with black masts and black sails, against the sky; but Ben's practised eye discovered that they were endeavouring to alter her course, for some reason of their own.

We were tossing like a cockleshell on the water, which was smooth, save for a long, deep swell. We were all three very silent; and presently I heard a noise.

"They are cruising in search of us," said Ben; "see, they've reefed all. Well, it is too dark for them to see us before daybreak, and if they cruise about till then—Mr. Warneford, you have your pistol!"

There was but one chamber discharged in mine; Ben looked to his own. "We shall be able to speak a boat," he said after awhile, "at far-off quarters or close; and speak her we will to a pretty tune; but, on such a night as this, they might as well look for King Pharaoh's chariot as for the captain's gig. Heart up, my pretty! We'll stand by you; and in the morning we'll be off on another tack. Heart up!"

Then a curious thing happened—unlucky, as it seemed then. I have learned since—for my dear girl has taught me—to look on it as a special grace of Providence. Suddenly—having been before in a black darkness—we became as it were the centre of a great light; all round the boat there burst from the darkened bosom of the water lurid flashes of fire. The short, crisp waves, as they rose to a head, broke not in white sea foam but in liquid fire; the swell of the ocean was like an upheaval of dull red lava; the sea was crossed and seamed with long lines of fire-like lightning, but that they remained or seemed

to remain constant. As the boat rocked on the heaving deep the flames, red and blue, shot from her sides; the skies, which were now overcast, reflected the light; the wind had dropped, and nearer and nearer still we could hear the dropping of the oars from the boat in search of us. It was the phosphorescent light of the Indian Ocean.

"Seems as if the Lord meant to have another life or two out of them murdering mutineers," said Ben. "Kind of beautiful, too, ain't it, miss? Lord, I've seen it off Peru, when there was no pirates and mutineers in chase, as bright as this! That was on board the Conqueror, hundred-and-twenty-gun man-o'-war; and the chaplain preached next day on the Lord's handiwork. Here they come, Mr. Warneford. Steady, and aim at the bow-oar; I take the stroke; fire when I give the word, and get the sculls ready in case of a miss."

They were about a quarter of a mile astern of us, pulling up hand over hand; because we never attempted—being in such bright light—to escape by rowing.

I sat in the bows, pistol in hand, Ben was in the stern, and the young lady amidships.

They hailed us to stop rowing. We were not pulling at all, so that no answer was necessary.

"A hundred yards, as I judge. Sculls out, and pistol ready to hand, Mr. Warneford. Don't let them run us down. Now give her headway; so, when I say 'Port,' pull with your left as hard as you know, ship the sculls, and let the bow-oar have it. Sit down, my pretty, shut both eyes, and say your prayers for me and Mr. Warneford, 'cos both on us needs them badly this very moment."

"Boat ahoy!" It was the voice of Boston Tom. "You, Warneford! You, George Warneford, convict and forger; 'vast rowing, and give us up the bo's'n and the girl, then you shall go free; if you don't, we will murder you as well as him."

We made no answer.

The boat came near. It was rowed by four oars, and—as I supposed—Boston Tom was in the stern.

"Run them down!" cried one of the crew, with an oath. All the time I was pulling quietly, so as to keep a steady way upon her.

"Port!" said Ben, suddenly.

I obeyed orders, and pulled my left.

Instantly the gig swung round, and the heavy ship's boat shot past our stern; and, as she passed, Ben's pistol fired once, and a yell of anguish told that the shot had taken effect.

As for myself, I could not recover in time; but one of the four oars was disabled.

"Surrender!" shouted Boston Tom. "Easy, bow; pull, two; we'll run them down. Surrender, you convict Warneford! If you won't take those terms, I'll give you better. Come on board with me, and I'll show you who really done it, and put you ashore safe and sound. I'll give you your revenge; I'll establish your innocence; I'll——"

This time, as they were turning, I let fly without orders, aiming at the bow-oar; and I hit him somewhere, because there was another yell.

They were within three-oars' length, but lying broadside on.

"Pull back to your ship," said Ben, "pirates and murderers, lest we take more lives! We've shot enough here for all your crew. Leave us, and wait for the time when I hang you all!"

In their haste, they had forgotten to bring the officers' pistols with them. Perhaps they could not find the powder and shot. Anyhow, there was not a sign or sound from the other boat, but the groaning and cries of the wounded men; and, after a pause, we saw the two who were left row back in silence towards the ship. That fight was over, at any rate. They passed away from the circle of phosphorescent light in which we lay, and so into outer darkness.

Then we were silent for the space of an hour or more. The phosphorescence died away, and the stars came out again. Presently in the east appeared the first faint streak of dawn, and Ben Croil broke the silence.

"What was them words as Boston Tom addressed to you, Mr. Warneford?"

"He called me convict and thief; and he said— No!" Here a sudden rush of thought filled my brain as I comprehended, for the first time, all the force of what he did say, and I could speak no more.

"Convict! Thief!" Ben cried. "And you as steady as the best man of us all! Done your duty like a man! Well—after that—there——"

Miss Elwood raised her head, and looked round in the gray of the dawn. She saw

my shameful head bowed between my hands. Convict and thief!

I felt her gentle hand in mine as she murmured, "The night is far spent and the day is at hand; let us thank God for our lives, and for His great gifts to man of courage and fidelity. Let us pray to Him never to let us forget this night, to forgive us all our trespasses, and to help us to forgive them that trespass against us."

So, in the lone waters of the Southern Indian Ocean, when the sun climbed up the rosy waves, the light fell upon a group of three in a little boat, kneeling together, and glorifying God through the mouth of that innocent girl; and of the three there was one at least whose heart was humbled and softened.

"Amen!" cried Ben Croil, clearing his throat. "And now we will look about us."

CHAPTER III. ST. PETER'S ISLAND.

WE looked about us. The day was upon us, and the sun, just risen, was already hot in our faces. The sea was calm, with a light breeze blowing from the trade quarter. The ship had disappeared.

"No sail in sight, nor any shore," said Ben Croil, looking at a pocket compass. "Heart up, pretty." That was what he always said. "There's water on board, also provisions, though not what we might wish for the likes of you. I thought it might come to this, and I victualled her. There's land on the weather bow, if the Lord let us reach it. Land—an island. St. Peter's Island, where we'll be picked up when we get there. Mr. Warneford, sir, help me hoist the sail." We carried a mast, and one small sail. Ben managed the ropes, while I steered under his orders. But first we rigged up, by means of the spare oar, some rough kind of covering to protect our passenger; and then we sailed on in silence, wrapped in our thoughts, while the boat danced upon the waves, leaving its little track of white foam behind it. A peaceful, quiet, and happy day. Helen tells me that she was not afraid all that time, nor was I. We were in a little open boat on the open sea; we were dependent for our safety on the continuance of calm weather; we were dependent for landing anywhere on old Ben's knowledge of the seas, and recollection of the chart. He knew the latitude and longitude of the boat, making allowance in dead reckoning for the time when we left the ship, and he knew the latitude and longitude of the nearest land. I drew a rough chart from

his information on the back of a letter which Helen had in her pocket. It had two places marked on it—the position of the ship Lucy Derrick at noon, September 15th, 1851, and the island of St. Peter.

It was a rough-and-ready way of reckoning, but I managed to place the position of the ship as near as possible where we left her, and Ben began to study the chart.

"Now, whether to put her head nor'-west by nor', or give her an extra point in a northerly direction, beats me quite. And there's currents which, in these little, fair-weather crafts, we ain't able to guard against, and the wind, which beats her on and off like. But St. Peter's lies over there. Heart up, pretty. We'll fetch land to-morrow, with the blessing of the Lord."

It was Ben who served out the rations and the water, of which we had a keg, besides a bottle of rum, and two or three bottles of wine, which had found their way among Ben's stores.

The sun went over our heads, and began to roll down into the west, but there was no life upon the waters except ourselves; no birds, no great or little fish, nothing to break the solitude. At a little after seven the sun went quite down, and in half an hour we were in darkness. The breeze freshened, but Ben kept up the sail, till I told him that I was dropping to sleep from sheer weariness. Then he took in the canvas, and resumed his place in the stern. Like a thoughtless and ungrateful wretch as I was, I threw myself into the bottom of the boat, and should have been asleep in five minutes, but for our passenger, who called the crew to prayers.

She was our chaplain, as well as our guardian angel; her sweet voice went up to heaven for us all as she sang the evening hymn. Then came over me—the first time for five years—that old feeling which is always new, that whether I lived or whether I died, all would somehow be well; and with the feeling upon me I laid my tired head upon the boards, and was asleep in a moment.

It was far advanced in the night when I awoke to relieve Ben. He had stripped himself of his coat, and laid it over the shoulders of the sleeping girl, and was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. As I stepped lightly over her form to take the strings from his hand, he whispered me:

"Mate, was that true—them words as Boston Tom spoke in the boat?"

"I have been a convict," I replied.

"How did he know that?"

"I cannot tell you; I wish to Heaven I could."

"What did he mean by saying he would tell you who really done it? Done what?"

"Done the forgery for which I was condemned. I am innocent, Ben Croil. Before God, I am innocent."

He was silent awhile.

"I can't see my way plain. One thing's got to be said. We may toss about in these seas till our water's gone; we may get cast away; we may be wrecked. I ain't so old but I can make a fight for life yet; and I ain't so young but what I may look to be called first. You may be innocent of that there forgery, or you may be guilty. No concern of mine. Innocent or guilty don't matter now; and whichever way it were, Mr. Warneford, the guilt of puttin' another man's name to a bit of paper is like the guilt of a baby crying at the wrong time, compared to the guilt of ill-treating the sweet young lady."

"I pray God," I returned, "that He will deal with me in His wrath if I shall deal with her unworthily—that He will punish me afresh for the deed I never committed, if I prove myself unworthy of this charge."

"That will do," said Ben; "and, now we understand each other, I think I'll turn in. Keep her head so. Steady."

I let him sleep till the day was high. When the first cold breeze of the morning touched our lady's face, she opened her eyes, and presently sat up beside me, and we talked.

That is to say, she talked. She told me about herself, how her mother was dead in England, and her father had taken her out to Australia five or six years ago. He was a barrister by profession, but he had no practice, and a very little money. So he went to Melbourne, bought a little piece of land with a log-house on it, and tried to practise there; only no clients came to him, or very few, and it was an uphill battle he had to fight. Then came the gold fever, and, like the rest of the world, he would be off to the diggings to make his fortune, while his child was sent off home out of the way.

All this history took a length of time to tell, and before it was done old Ben woke up with a start. He looked round the sea, as if to make quite sure that we had not gone to the bottom in his sleep; and then nodding cheerfully to his charge and to me, began to scan the horizon to the north and north-west.

"Land!" he cried, pointing to what seemed a little bank of cloud, as big as a man's hand, rising out of the circle of which we were the centre. "Land ahead of us. Land thirty miles off. Heart up, my pretty, and a double ration for breakfast. Now, Mr. Warneford, the breeze is light, but we'll up sail and make what running we can. Maybe by noon we must get the sculls out."

Our captivity in the boat had been too short for us to feel any of the sufferings or disappointed hopes, which make the story of a shipwreck so often tragic. We had suffered nothing beyond exposure on a summer sea for four-and-twenty hours. But the certainty of a speedy deliverance paled my cheek, and brought the tears to Miss Elwood's eyes.

"Let us have morning prayers," she said; "and thank God for this deliverance."

Ben Croil nodded. At the same time he cut an inch or so of tobacco for a fresh filling, and winked at me as much as to say that we were not out of the wood yet.

We were not, indeed.

The land, as we drew nearer, seemed a long and low islet, without any hills, and covered with some sort of low-lying vegetation. It was less than thirty miles from us, because while it was seven in the morning when it became visible, by ten we were within a mile, beating about for the best place of landing.

"The island of St. Peter?" said Miss Elwood. "I never heard of that island; tell me about it, Mr. Croil."

"No one never heard about it," said Ben, "except them as made the charts, because no one never goes there. But they pass by, do the ships, and they will pick us up. It may be to-morrow; it may be in a year's time; it may be in ten years' time. The whalers have been known to touch there, so there must be water; and where there's water there's birds, and where there's water there's fish; and so what I says again is, Heart up, my pretty. Luff, Mr. Warneford."

There was a little creek, up which Ben steered the boat; it opened into a round bay or harbour, capable of holding half the ships in the world. On either side was the land, not in cliffs or hills, but in a low table-land. In one place a little cascade, ten or twenty feet high, fell into the blue water, with a rainbow hanging over it, and in another we saw the remains of a rude log-house, built out of boat-planks.

To this spot we steered, and landed on a point of gray sand, up which we two men pulled the boat high and dry above the tide. There we disembarked our young lady. The first thing to do was to visit the log-house. The door had fallen from its rude hinges, which had been of leather; there had been a rough kind of window-shutter, which now lay on the ground; and the roof, which could never have been weather-tight, was built up with planks, of which half-a-dozen had been blown off.

We looked inside.

On the floor lay a skeleton. Dressed in rough sailor's clothes, the hands in gloves, the feet in great boots—a skeleton. He lay with his head upon his arm, as if he had given up the ghost painlessly. Beside him were a chair, a rude sort of table, and a bed. Shelves had been rigged up in the walls of the house, and on these stood stores. There were bottles still full of rum, tins of provisions, cases of biscuit, cases of candles—all sorts of things.

We stood looking in horror at this spectacle of death, which greeted us on our landing, as if it were a bad omen.

"Dead," said Ben Croil. "Dead this many a day; and no ships touched here all the time. Well, he's left his house to us, Mr. Warneford; we must bury him somehow."

"And are we to live here—here—in the same house?" cried Helen. "Oh, it will be like living in a charnel house."

So it would; but what were we to do?

Finally we hit on a compromise. We would take down the framework, when we had buried the skeleton, and rebuild the house farther off. We looked in the dead man's pockets—there was not a scrap of paper to identify him by, not any morsel of writing anywhere, to show who he was, and what had been his history.

Ben Croil took the boots, the overcoat, and the gloves, as well as a watch and a purse, containing some English money. Then we dug, with the aid of a two-inch board, a grave in the sand, and laid the poor bones to rest until the Last Day. When we came back from our dreary job we found that Miss Elwood had been weeping, at least the tears stood in her eyes; but she brushed them away, and made herself helpful, running backwards and forwards to the boat and bringing up everything that she could carry.

Our house was not finished for several days; but we made a tent for her, and slept in front of it ourselves, so that no

harm might come to her except over our own bodies. In the daytime we were busy building. We found a bag of tools, part of the bequest of our poor Robinson Crusoe, which came in handy, as you may believe; and on the fourth day we had as neat a house, twelve feet high, and in the inside fifteen by ten, as you could expect to find. There was but one room; but we made two at night, by a curtain made out of the boat's sail. And when the house was finished, we sat down, and asked ourselves, What next?

Miss Elwood, while we were building, explored the whole island. There was not much to explore. It was, as near as we could make out, a mile long by half-a-mile broad. There were two springs in it, one of which formed the little stream which poured its water into the bay where we landed. There were multitudes of sea-birds running and flying about the place, whose eggs we took for our food. There was a sort of wood in one place, the trees of which were so blown down and beaten about by the wind that none of them were more than ten feet high, while the branches were interlaced and mingled together in inextricable confusion. The middle part of the islet was, in fact, lower than the edges, and covered with grass; and at the western point there stood, all by itself, a rock, about forty or fifty feet high, round which hovered and flew perpetually myriads of birds.

I found a way to the top of this rock, and planted there our signal of distress—a long white streamer flying from the mast of the boat, which we managed to stick pretty firmly into a cleft of the rock.

This rigged up, we settled down to our new life.

The manner of it was as follows:

We began with morning prayers, said by our chaplain. Then breakfast. Then, in fine weather, Ben and I went fishing in the bay—not far from land, you may be sure, because Helen begged us, with tears in her eyes, not to risk being carried out to sea, and leaving her alone upon the island. When we had luck, we would bring home enough fish for dinner and breakfast too. On such days we were sparing with our stores. Then for dinner, besides the fish, we had sea-birds' eggs, strong in taste but not unwholesome, boiled or fried; and sometimes, to vary the diet, we knocked down the birds themselves and roasted them. For firewood we had our little coppice to cut and hack at. Our supper was the

same as our dinner; and, as the evenings soon grew cold and chilly, we used, after supper, to sit all three together round the fire of logs, and talk till Ben gave the word to turn in. Then evening prayers and sleep till dawn.

Sitting before the fire in these long evenings of winter, when we did not care to waste our little stock of candles, it was natural that we should get to know each other, and it stood to reason that I should be asked to tell my story over and over again. At first I could see that old Ben distrusted me. A convict, he thought, must needs be a thief. Else how should he be a convict? He trusted me, however, with the young lady; he could depend upon me for my share of duty. But that story of innocence was, for a long time, too much for him; and it was a joyful moment for me when, one evening, Ben held out his hand to me.

"Theer," he said, "I can't help it; I've tried hard to help it, but I can't. My lad, you are as innocent as I am. You could not steal if you were to try. Show me the man as says you could!"

I went through it all from the beginning, picking up a thread here and a forgotten detail there. Miss Elwood, listening, was putting it together, until she knew as much as I knew myself.

Ben Croil, taking small interest in the details, contented himself with the main facts. It was enough for him that a great crime had been committed, and the wrong-doer never punished. While we talked in those long winter evenings, he sat silent in his own corner with his head against the wall, until the time arrived when he could smoke the one half pipe which he allowed himself for a daily ration.

And the story came to this. I tell it here because it was told so often during our stay on the island.

On Friday morning, August 18th, 1846, I went as usual to the office in Lower Thames-street, being then a clerk in the firm of Batterick and Baldwin, of five years' standing, getting on for one-and-twenty years of age, in the receipt of a salary, handsome for my age and standing, of a hundred and twenty pounds a-year. I lived just south of the Borough, between the church and Kennington-common, having my little sister Ruth with me in lodgings. Ruth was at school all day, but had tea ready for me when I reached home, which happened, unless a press of work kept me longer, not later than six.

After tea I went through her lessons with the child, and at nine o'clock she went to bed. In those days it was reckoned a bad sign for a young City man to be out late at night, or to smoke, or to frequent taverns; and there were no music-halls or such places. Day after day that was my simple life. A week's holiday in the autumn gave me a run with Ruth to Herne Bay or Gravesend, just to smell the sea. There were a few old friends of my father's whom we visited at regular intervals. I knew nothing of the dissipations and vices of the great city, and was as unsuspicious of them as if they did not exist. That was my life. The life of a hard-working City clerk, hoping by long years of patient work to rise to the higher levels of good salary and complete confidence. As I have said above, I had already risen above the heads of some, my seniors in point of age.

Friday morning, August 18th, 1846, I was at the office door when the City clocks began striking nine. I was at my desk before the last stroke of the last clock had ceased. At ten I was sent for; Mr. Baldwin, the chief partner, wanted me. He was busy when I went in, and hardly looked up. He had a message of some importance to give me, which it would have taken time to write. He explained the circumstances at full length, and instructed me as to the form in which I was to set them forth. He was a precise gentleman, and liked to have things put in language as definite as possible. When I quite understood what I was to say, and how I was to say it, I asked him if there was anything else I could do for him. He looked round, and taking an envelope which lay at his elbow, half opened it and handed it to me.

"You may cash that little cheque for me, Warneford, if you will be so kind," he said. "I will take it in gold."

I took the envelope, without looking at the contents, and went away.

After executing my first commission, and receiving a satisfactory answer, I returned to the office, and my foot was on the threshold when I suddenly remembered the cheque. It was lucky, I thought, because Mr. Baldwin was in the clerks' office, and with him a gentleman, who I remembered afterwards was one of the partners in the firm of Sylvester, Cayley, and Co., our bankers. I ran to the bank as fast as I could, threw the envelope across the counter, and said, "Gold, please,"

as I pulled out my handkerchief and wiped my forehead, for the day was hot.

The clerk opened the cheque, looked at me with surprise for a moment, and then left the counter, while he went first to the door, and said something to the porter, and then walked into the inner room. He came back to me after two or three minutes, and said, "You must go inside, please; go quietly. It's all up at last."

Now I declare that I knew no more what he meant than a child, but I supposed there was some message for Mr. Baldwin, and I went into the inner room, filled with clerks, where the real business of the bank was transacted. Everybody looked at me oddly, as I walked to the end at which the partners and managers were to be found. One of them seemed to be waiting for me; he pointed to a chair.

"Sit down," he said, "and wait."

The tone of his voice was not encouraging, but I obeyed and waited. Not a single thought crossed my brain that there was or could be anything wrong.

In ten minutes or so a policeman appeared, and I understood I was to go with him.

I thought it must be as a witness, and it was not till I was at the Mansion House that I knew I was arrested on a charge of forgery.

I laughed; it was so absurd, that I laughed.

"Send for Mr. Baldwin," I said.

They put me in the dock for the preliminary examination. Mr. Baldwin gave evidence. He was shaken and agitated; he would not look me in the face. He broke down once or twice with emotion, but his evidence was clear. It had been discovered a day or two before that a system of embezzlement, by way of forgery, had been in practice for some months. The signature of the firm had been forged by someone who knew how to imitate the handwriting of Mr. Baldwin. A sum—in all amounting to upwards of nine hundred pounds—had been thus fraudulently obtained. To stop the forger Mr. Baldwin had been asked by the bank to add a private mark to his name. On this morning he had placed in my hands, he said, an envelope containing a cheque for twelve pounds, with his signature having the private mark, and he had asked me to cash that cheque at the bank. He swore positively that he had drawn that cheque, and no other, the day before—the counterfoil

proved that—yet the cheque I presented was for eighty pounds, and it had not the private mark.

Observe, now, how the evidence grew more and more circumstantial. I had one cheque given me; I presented another. Doubtless I must have torn up the first on the way. Then an important circumstance. I came back from executing my commission, but did not cash the cheque. I got as far as the door of the office; I was seen to look in and retreat hurriedly. Mr. Baldwin was in the clerks' room, with one of the partners of the bank. I walked fast, or rather ran, to the bank. I presented the cheque for eighty pounds in a quick, anxious way, and I asked for the whole amount in gold. Naturally it was assumed that I was going to abscond with the proceeds of my last forgery. In fact, no question at all was raised as to my guilt; that was concluded from the very beginning. The Lord Mayor refused bail, and I was sent at once to the prison, which I only left in order to be tried and convicted.

That was the story. I told it again and again, while the wood fire crackled on the hearth. Miss Elwood asked me for every detail; she talked the matter over and looked at in all its lights, but she always came back to one point.

"Mr. Baldwin gave you a cheque which he had drawn the day before. How could he swear that the envelope had not been changed by someone else?"

And there was another point. It was assumed, though the charge was not pressed, that I had been the forger in the preceding frauds. Now no clerk could swear that I had presented any other of the forged cheques. Also it was proved in the defence that my life was quite quiet, innocent, and simple. Every hour of my day was laid open for the jury. No motive was discovered for the circumstance, no secret source of extravagance was ascertained; and it was found that the frauds had been committed by means of a cheque-book—got Heaven knows where—not that in the possession of Mr. Baldwin. No attempt was made to find out how I could have obtained another cheque-book.

But these were trifles light as air in comparison with the weight of the circumstances against me.

Always Miss Elwood came back to the same point.

"Who could have changed the envelope with Mr. Baldwin's cheque?"

I do not say that the discussion of my story occupied the whole of our time on the island of St. Peter. We had work to do all day, and were often glad to turn in soon after dark. In the summer we walked and talked outside, and we were always looking for the ship that was to give us our release.

At first we looked with certainty. Every morning I climbed up the rock, and looked round on the broad bosom of the sea. Every morning I made the same gesture of disappointment. In a few months we got to look on deliverance as a thing possible, indeed, but far off. After two years we no longer dared to hope. In the third year we sometimes looked at one another with eyes which said, what the tongue dared not utter, "We are prisoners here for life."

Our stores by this time had well nigh vanished, save for a few bottles of wine kept for medicine, the only medicine we had. Old Ben was fain to smoke a tobacco compounded of herbs which he gathered and dried. We had learned by this time the resources of our island, and knew exactly what variety it afforded, and what was best for us to eat. There was plenty, such as it was. The birds did not desert us, nor the fish; there were eggs, there was a kind of wild lettuce, there was abundance of fresh water, and there was still a tin of biscuits for Miss Elwood in case she might take a dislike, as happened once, to the simple food of our island life. We fell into the way by degrees of arranging our days, as if there was never to be any change. For myself I almost think now that, but for one thing, I did not want any so far as I was concerned. The one thing was that I had come to an understanding with Miss Elwood. It grew up by degrees. It was long before I ventured to tell her what I felt. The words were forced from me one night when, old Ben being asleep on his stool with his head against the fire, my sweet mistress was more than usually kind—if it were possible for her to be kinder at one time than at another—and I was more than usually forgetful of my condition. I remember—as if I should ever forget that moment!—that I took her hand as it lay upon her lap, and held it in mine while I looked in her face, and in her soft, sweet hazel eyes. I saw by the look in those eyes that she knew what I was burning to say, and I waited for the least token, any hint, that I was not to say it. It was a night in our winter, the English

July; outside the hut, the wind whistled and the rain fell.

I told her in three words what I had to say, and I was silent again. She said nothing, and I kissed her hand.

"Speak to me, darling, speak!" I whispered; "if it is only to forbid me ever again to tell you what I feel."

"George," she replied, bending low towards me, so that I felt her sweet breath, and caught the glow of the fire upon her blushing cheek, "we have been together more than two years; we have learned to read each other's souls. My beloved, if you have learned to love me, who am I that I should not learn to love you in return? Tell me what is right to do. No, not now—not to-night; think it over, and tell me to-morrow."

I passed that night in sleepless thought. Had I done wrong in speaking my mind? And yet if we were to spend our lives in this forlorn and cast-away condition! Could Helen marry me, if we were back in Melbourne or in London? With what face could I ask it; how go to her father; how dare even to lift my eyes towards her? But here it was different; and in the morning I came to some sort of conclusion. I told her what I thought was right for us both to do. I would not accept the great sacrifice of an engagement from her. I had been wrong, perhaps, in telling her my love, but it was too late to retract that. If relief came to us speedily, she should be free; if none came within a year, we would marry on the island; but should we before that time be taken from the place, we would only marry should it please God to make my innocence plain before all the world.

She accepted my conditions. She said that she would marry me when and where I pleased, but for the sake of her father. If we got safe to England my character should be cleared, if that might be, for my own sake. She knew me, she said, and that was enough.

We were happier, I think, after that. I began almost to hope even that no ship might come before the end of the year; but one day—it wanted but a month of the time—I saw, with a heart full of conflicting emotions, a whaler steering straight for our island. Ben Croil rushed up to the signal-rock, and began waving his streamers with frantic shouts.

Helen and I looked at each other, and the tears came into my eyes.

"Helen," I said, "I am going back

again to the world as a returned convict. I have lost you for ever."

"No, no!" she cried, throwing herself into my arms. "Never, George. We will work together to solve this mystery; and if it is never solved, my love and my husband, the Lord will find out a way. Only wait and trust; and if the worst comes to the worst—if we are never to marry—we shall be brother and sister always. But, in all this wide world, do not forget that there is only one man whom I can ever love."

And here I lay down the pen, and leave another to tell the story of how the sword of honour was restored to me.

CHAPTER IV. DANCING AND DEPORTMENT.

So far in the heart of the City as to make one doubt whether it has not got clean beyond the heart, and gone over to the other side, stands a street of private houses, at sight of which the rare and casual stranger wonders what manner of people they be who dwell therein. Their only knowledge of London squares and the aristocracy must be derived from America-square, to which the street is a near neighbour. Their knowledge of life must be taken from the Docks hard by, and from the Thames, which bears, within a stone's-throw of their doors, its fresh freights from India and far Cathay. They have the Tower of London for a subject of perpetual contemplation; and by penetrating Thames-street they may sometimes make acquaintance with the exteriors of those who come from the unknown glories of the western land—from the golden Belgravia and the ducal meadows of fair Tyburnia. But wherever they fare in search of the unknown and the picturesque, their lives are settled where there is a steady calm in the midst of turmoil. The outer world seems to belong not to them, nor its troubles; its fiercer joys they know not; the battle rages round them, but not in their midst; and the citizens who dwell in Yendo-street are a peaceful folk, mostly poor, and nearly all contented. Half way up the street, on the left-hand side, is a house which, exactly like the rest in all other respects, differs from them in a look of extreme cleanliness, which, with a freshness of green paint, makes it stand out from the neighbours as a house which claims the attention due to respectability of a high order. On the door is a large brass plate, on which is inscribed, "M. Lemire,

Professor of Dancing, Calisthenics, and Deportment;" and on a large card in the front window appears the same statement, followed by the daring assertion that "References are permitted to the highest Nobility, Gentry, and Proprietors of Schools in the Kingdom." Side by side with this placard was another of smaller dimensions, with the simple word "Lodgings" upon it; for Professor Lemire added to his artistic pursuit the business of letting lodgings, whenever lodgers should be induced by the voice of fame, or by a calm consideration of the advantage of the situation, to settle for a time in the neighbourhood of America-square. It is proper to explain that hitherto—that is, since the hoisting of the placard, which was in a manner a flag of distress—no lodger had yet knocked at the door except one, and he had been, financially speaking, a failure. So the professor, albeit retaining the placard, thought little of his lodgings, and looked to his art for daily bread.

Art, however, at the East-end of the City makes a precarious livelihood; there were a few private schools, where the professor's services were required at a very moderate remuneration, and a sprinkling of pupils could be got together to form a winter class, to which he yearly looked forward with hopes always doomed to disappointment. The dapper little dancing-master made out of all a very slender income indeed, and the family table was frugal all the year round. The professor was, in this year 1855 of which we write, between forty and fifty years of age. His father and his grandfather had been dancing-masters before him, in the same neighbourhood, when there were yet wealthy merchants living there, and dancing was a serious accomplishment. His son Rupert, he said, should try other fields; but for him—his lines were fixed. Professor Lemire was of Huguenot descent, and among the family treasures was the old sword which had been drawn at the great siege of La Rochelle; but all the warrior blood must have been exhausted at the period when the professor saw the light, for a more soft-hearted, tender, and sympathetic creature did not exist. He was a small, thin, and wiry man; he had a clean-shaven face, bright black eyes, and black hair; he dressed in black tob, with clothes fitting tight to his elastic limbs; and he had one pet vanity—he was proud of his irreproachable linen. Madame Lemire was an English-

woman, who had conquered the youthful professor's heart by an extraordinary devotion to his own art, in which, however, her success was but moderate. She was taller, and a great deal heavier than her husband, whose genius she worshipped; she was also as tender-hearted. And she was prolific; no fewer than twelve children graced the board on which the family meals were spread, and often spread in an unsatisfactory manner. The children were all named in accordance with ancient Huguenot custom—either after old leaders of the cause, or after the Bible. The boys were Rupert, Gaspard, Moïse, Élie, and so on; the girls were Antoinette, Charlotte, Rebekah, and Marie. They were carefully instructed in the religion and language of their ancestors, so that they were bilingual, and talked French as well as English. They were also trained to consider that the queen and empress of all arts was the art of dancing; that to dance well was a gift given to few, but to be aimed at by all; and that their father was the greatest living master of the mystery. The eldest of them, Rupert, promised to surpass his sire. Before he could walk he could dance. Before he could talk he showed capabilities with his legs, which brought tears of joy to his father's eyes. Long before he knew that speech may be represented, for purposes of persuasion, history, deceit, or love-making, by certain symbols called the alphabet, Rupert Lemire could reach a foot and a half above his own height with either toe, right or left; could lift either leg—not one leg only, mind you—over the head of every boy his own height; and could treat every limb in his body as if it were an independent organ, free to act exactly as it pleased, and unfettered by any of the ordinary laws of anatomy. He was taller by four or five inches than the father. He was eighteen years of age. There was nothing in the whole mystery of dancing which his father had to teach him; there was no harlequin at Christmas pantomimes at whom he did not secretly scoff in considering his own powers. He regarded dancing as the highest of all the arts, as has been said; and yet there was one thing wanting. Much as he loved the art, he loved the ocean more—that is, he burned to love it more, because he had never seen it; and it went to his parents' hearts to see the boy of so much promise rejoice in putting off the tight professional pants, and rush to the docks among the ships and sailors, clad in a suit of

blue flannels, trying to look like the oldest of salts.

The second in order to Rupert was Antoinette. If it may be spoken of Mademoiselle Lemire with all respect, she was for elasticity and mastery over her joints almost the equal of Rupert. She was seventeen, and her function was to go to the ladies' school with her father, and help in teaching the girls. She was a great favourite, because, when she could get a clear stage, and no eyes but the girls' to watch her, she would execute all sorts of impossible things in dancing by herself. A clever girl, she had received from nature a mobile and sympathetic face—a face which exactly reproduced that of the first Lemire, hanging on the wall, the banished Huguenot; this old fellow, with the face which tried to be grim and was brimming over with fun. In fact Antoinette, who was, like Rupert, a dancer born, resembled Michel Lemire, formerly merchant of Saintes, as much as a daughter can resemble her father. As for the other children, they were like each other, in being one and all passionately fond of dancing. When ordinary children would have played games, the little Lemires played at dancing. When there was no school, the professor taught his children; all day long the sound of the kit was heard from the class-room, and the beating of the childish feet upon the floor, as one after the other practised, and was instructed.

There was one other inhabitant of the house, a young lady, a girl of Rupert's age, that is one year older than Nettie Lemire, and three years older than poor little Charlotte—the cripple of the family—a bright-faced, brown-eyed, brown-haired maiden, of tall and lissom figure, bright of eye, ready with speech and smile, happy in little things, the real sister of the children, the real daughter of the professor, the right hand of madame. Her name was Ruth Warneford. Eight years before this date, when she was a child of ten years old, she was brought to the house by a servant, who said that he came from the house of Batterick and Baldwin, that this was the child about whom the correspondence had taken place, and that the box contained all her things. So she was left. At that time a dreadful thing had happened to the child, but she was too young yet quite to realise how dreadful a thing it was. She had lost her only brother. When she

grew older and began to understand things, she comprehended that he had disgraced himself and was sent to prison; but no one told her the story. It was Mr. Baldwin, the man whose name George Warneford had forged, who took her, friendless and deserted, from the lodgings in Kennington, and sent her to Professor Lemire to be brought up with his children. He left her there because he found she was well treated and happy; and when she grew older he gave her a caution, which appeared to the little girl harsh and stern—never to breathe a word of her brother, never to think of him, and never to hope to see him again. The child obeyed, and among the other children only spoke of her brother, if she spoke of him at all, as one who had “gone away.” She was grown up now, and she knew, alas! whither he had gone. He had not passed away from her heart, but he was become a name, the mention of which touched some forgotten chord, and brought a feeling of ineffable sadness upon her soul. But that was seldom.

Ruth was at work now. She was a governess, earning her own little income, and paying the good people who were her second parents her own share of the household expenses. Mr. Baldwin wished her to be independent. “You will be happier so,” he said; “work is good for the soul. I hear nothing but good of you, young lady; work hard, and eat the bread of industry. If you fall into ill-health, if you meet with any bad fortune, if you fail through any misfortune, come at once to me. I wish to help you, for the sake of your father, and of one”—here the old man’s voice faltered for a moment—“one who was dear to me years ago, and who promised great things; but the promise was not kept. God bless you, Ruth Warneford!”

The girl understood that it was her brother—he who was gone—whom Mr. Baldwin had once loved, and she went away shamefaced. So that the shadow of this crime rested upon many hearts. The wreck of one poor human ship upon the ocean of life somehow drags down with it so many others; the sudden storm in which George Warneford went down disabled half-a-dozen gallant craft.

So Ruth Warneford became a visiting governess. The neighbourhood of America-square would not at first sight appear to offer the most desirable opening for such a profession. But then, if your ambition is bounded by the sum of eighteenpence an

hour at the outside; if you do not mind trudging a mile or two from house to house; if you are ready to begin work at eight, and to leave off at six; if you do not look for pupils more genteel than the children of respectable tradesmen; and if you have youth and hope;—you may find America-square by no means a bad place as a base of operations. Ruth not only toiled all day when clients came, but, when business was slack, filled up her time by teaching the younger members of the Lemire family; and the earnings of the girl were useful, and helped out the income of the family. Indeed, had it not been for Ruth, the dinner of soup and vegetables must often have been exchanged for the dinner of dry bread; for times were growing very hard with the professor. A dreary life for the girl! hard work from morning till night; and yet she endured it, and was happy. She had no holidays, and never went anywhere; still she was happy—happy until one day came which shattered her little Castle of Delight.

It happened through her taking the post—which she thought great promotion—of organist to St. Ethelred’s Church.

CHAPTER V. MY BROTHER’S SIN.

As organist of St. Ethelred’s, Ruth had the privilege of practising in the church on such afternoons as were available. She used to secure the services of one of the younger Lemires, generally Charlotte, as blower; and it was at such times her rarest pleasure to sit before the grand old organ for long hours, playing till the evening shadows turned the obscurities of the old church into deep blackness, and softened the stiff outlines of the kneeling marble figures. St. Ethelred’s is a church spared by the Great Fire, and half forgotten when it was a mark of grace to destroy the images of the dead. Here lie the mortal remains of many a dead lord mayor and alderman; here, kneeling gravely opposite each other, are the effigies of knight and dame; here is a crusader with his legs crossed; here is the mitred abbot, the crozier turned away from his face to mark that he was no bishop, but yet greater than bishop in the administration of his immense revenues; here are monuments of all the centuries, from the fourteenth, stiff and mannered, but with lace-like delicate tracing, and once with bright colours, now all faded and forgotten, to the sprawling, tasteless tomb of

the last century. There will be no more monuments in the old church; and, in course of time, the desecrating hand of the City architect will remove the venerable stones and the monuments, to make room for a new street, or to build new city offices. But foremost among the tombs at present, is that of old Alderman Sowerbutts. St. Ethelred's is, as an uneducated describer might fairly put it, two churches side by side. The scanty congregation sit in the right-hand church, which faces the altar, and in the north side stand the tombs, except a few of the older ones, which are in the south wall. The tomb of Alderman Sowerbutts occupies a large part of the north aisle to itself. It is a striking monument, containing many tons of marble, and surrounded by gilt railings. The worthy alderman died in the year 1691, just about the period when benevolence, as shown in the establishment of almshouses and institutions of charitable education, was invented. By his will he directed that the bulk of his fortune should be expended in the maintenance, first, of houses for the reception of twelve widows of liverymen from his own guild; and secondly, of a school where twenty boys and twenty girls, born in the parish of St. Ethelred, should receive a sound Protestant education, free of all charges. This was very noble, and pleased everybody, except the lawful heirs of Alderman Sowerbutts, who, for some generations afterwards, gnashed their teeth when they passed the church of St. Ethelred. There was another provision in the will of the testator, by which it was directed that the rector of the parish, accompanied by his churchwardens, one of his trustees, the clerk, the schoolmaster, and six of the boys, should, once a year, visit the church, open the tomb, and satisfy themselves that he—the deceased alderman—was actually there in the flesh, and not removed. Why this mortal dread of being taken out of the grave assailed the alderman, it is impossible to explain. But the fact is so, and until a very few years ago the annual procession was made with great solemnity.

The church, old as it was, standing two feet below the street level, and four feet below the level of its little churchyard, piled high with the dust of five-and-twenty articularly speaking generations, was Ruth Warneford's private sanctum, when she could spare an hour. She and little Charlotte, the lame girl, would sit in the quiet old place by themselves, alone

and silent, watching the light from the painted windows play upon the deserted aisles, or talking in whispers, or the child would pump the bellows while Ruth played. They let themselves into the church by the vestry-door, and were secure against any chance visitors, while the busy city rushed to and fro among the alleys outside. No rural corner of green England, no country churchyard in the wildest country district could match the solitude and loneliness of this old City place of worship, on any afternoon in the week.

Stay, there was one visitor. Ruth Warneford kept her Saturday afternoons for organ practice; any other day's freedom was a holiday, to be sure, but a holiday which made an inroad into her slender purse. Twenty years ago the Saturday half-holiday was a thing just beginning to be talked about. Shops would not hear of it, merchants, as a rule, thought it a robbery of time due to them. Clerks hardly hoped to get it. But there was one clerk at least, John Wybrow by name, a member of St. Ethelred's choir, who must have got his Saturday half-holiday regularly. He never missed looking in at the church at four o'clock on that day, when Ruth was playing over the hymns for the next day's service, and poor little Charlotte sat behind, plying the pump-handle, with an attentive eye to the position of the little ball at the end of the string, and listening while the roll of the mighty music echoed along the walls, and high in the rafters of the roof.

John Wybrow came every Saturday for nearly a year. It was natural that he, being a member of the choir, and their most useful tenor—in fact their only tenor—should like to try his part over beforehand; and who so able to help him as the organist? The visit might therefore be regarded as official, and performed in the discharge of duty. So far it was praiseworthy. Ruth, who was not yet eighteen when she became organist, at a salary of twenty pounds a year, at first regarded the appearance of the tenor, who was then about twenty-two, entirely in this light, being in no way put to confusion by the fact that he was young, good-looking, and of the opposite sex. Ruth had nothing to do with the foolish thoughts which such a fortuitous concurrence of qualities too often engenders. Her life was full of real business. Then, when the exercises were finished, when Ruth had played over two of her pieces,

while John Wybrow sat beside her and listened, what could be more in accordance with the dictates of natural politeness than that he should walk home with her, and help little Charlotte, who had to walk with a crutch, across the streets? It was not far to the professor's, and John Wybrow having succeeded somehow in getting inside the house, grew to abuse this privilege, by staying to tea every Saturday evening. The whole family of the Lemires liked him except one. Rupert, the eldest, for some reason of his own, chose to take offence at his coming, and in confidence to Antoinette, expressed his conviction that Mr. Wybrow was a puppy.

On those evenings this simple family got through their bread and butter and tea with mirth and merriment.

And after the tea, of course, they would have a dance.

None of your meaningless scampers à deux temps, as was then the new fashion in frivolous England. Not at all. The professor, with grave air, assumed a violin in place of the usual kit, took up a position in the corner, and looking solemnly round, named the dances and the dancers.

"Minuet de la Cour—Mr. Wybrow and Miss Warneford."

Then would John Wybrow, with Castilian courtesy, lead Ruth, as grave as if she were dancing before a court, to her place, and with her go through the stately steps, while the children seated round criticised, not unkindly, but with severity. This was not a rehearsal, but a performance, and the professor permitted himself no observations. The minuet concluded, the performers sat down, amid a chorus of remarks and commentaries.

"Pas de fascination—Mademoiselle Antoinette Lemire."

Then would burst upon the ever-delighted gaze of the children, their eldest sister, in a miraculous robe of white muslin, clad in which, as in a cloud of glory, she displayed miracles of art. There were no criticisms upon her, only a rapturous round of applause, when, with parted lips, bright eyes, and panting breath, she finished the last pirouette as gracefully as Fanny Elslar herself.

"La Tarantula—Monsieur Rupert Lemire and Mademoiselle Antoinette Lemire."

"Danse des Exilés, Souvenir de la Rochelle."

This was a dance invented by the first Lemire who took to the dancing profession. It was executed first in solo, and then in full

chorus, by the family altogether, assisted by Bath and John Wybrow. Perhaps this finished the performance; perhaps there was a simple waltz; perhaps, too, at this juncture John Wybrow remembered that he had taken the liberty of ordering a few oysters for supper, and so on; the party finishing, as it began, in simple mirth and happiness, for Ruth was yet in that dreamy state of uncalculating happiness—a happy Fool's Paradise of innocence—to waken out of which is to realise one's humanity, with all its complicated forces of past, present, and future, its dangers and its passions. John Wybrow, during all these times, never told the girl that he loved her. Yet his hand-pressure grew always warmer, his voice grew always softer, his eyes rested always longer upon Ruth's fair head, and he became every week more and more the brightness and joy of her life. If this does not constitute love on both sides, what does? Yet the girl never thought of anything being said to alter the sweetness of this innocent pastoral; and the young man, for some reason, refrained from speaking the word which should break the spell.

But the spell was broken, and rudely.

It was a Saturday afternoon in early autumn. The splendour of the season showed itself on country-sides in waving fields of ripened corn, in apple orchards ruddy with their fruit, in woods where the trees seemed to hang down their heavy foliage in the still heat, as if weary with excess of pleasure. In London it showed itself by hot and glaring streets; by announcements of cool drinks in public-houses; and by a smell as of an immense bakery, where all the children's mud-pies, the cabbage-stalks, the orange-peel, and the general refuse of a great city were being cooked in one large oven. In the church of St. Ethelred it showed itself by an unwonted splendour of the painted glass. The colours which fell on the tombs and monuments were brighter than usual; the knight and dame who knelt opposite to each other, with hands clasped at head and foot of their common grave, received the crimson rays upon their heads, and lost for a while the rigidity by which their sculptor had tried to represent dignity. The sunlight played upon the organ beside the altar, and fell in a cloud of colour upon the patient face of poor little Charlotte Lemire, who was left there alone thinking. On the steps of the organ-loft sat, side by side, John Wybrow and Ruth

Warneford. Mark, that he has not spoken a word of love; nor has she thought of love; yet they sit like lovers, only not hand-in-hand.

The young man has been telling the girl of places which he knows, not far away, where stretch meadows, covered with flowers from spring to late autumn—the golden buttercup, the meadow-sweet, the wild convolvulus, and the cowslip—where there are woods, and streams, and corn-fields.

"Some day, Ruth, we will go and see them. Some day, when I am my own master." He added the last words under his breath.

"Ah!" she sighed, "I have no holiday. It is wrong to be always wishing for things; but oh! John, I do sometimes long for a little change—just a few days in the country, such as I used to have when I was a little girl, before—long ago. It would be something to think of in the winter evenings, you see, especially if I thought I could go again."

"Poor Ruth! Poor child! I wish I could do something for you; but I cannot—yet. I am only a clerk now. Will you have a little more patience?"

"Now, you will think I am complaining. But indeed, indeed, I am not. I am very happy. I am sure I ought to be. Only now and then, when the sun is hot and the streets are close, and when young gentlemen like Mr. John Wybrow tell me of beautiful places, where rich people can wander and see sweet things—why then, you see, it is hard not to feel a little, just a little, discontented. And if I am discontented, what ought poor little Charlotte to be?"

"Poor Charlotte!"

"Look at her, John. She will sit there so long as I let her. To be in the quiet church soothes her nerves; she cannot bear the noise of the other children—she is happiest here. If I were a cripple, do you think I should be so patient as that poor child?"

Ruth shook her little head with a gesture of self-reproach.

What further line the conversation might have taken cannot safely be asserted, because it was then interrupted by a great trampling of feet, and noise of men in the church porch.

"It is the alderman's day," said Ruth. "Let us sit here quietly, and we shall see it all. The railings of the tomb are opened."

The doors were flung open, and there

marched up the aisle a procession. First came the beadle, with the gold stick of office. He was followed by the rector, in full canonicals. After him, somewhat marring the effect by an ignoble limp, came the clerk. After the clergy followed the laity, consisting of two trustees, the schoolmaster, and a tail of six boys. A stray gentleman, not belonging to the procession, came in after the rest, and at sight of him both the spectators on the steps of the organ-loft started, and one of them, the young man, changed colour.

"There is Mr. Baldwin, my benefactor," said Ruth quietly. She did not look up, or she would have seen John Wybrow turn pale and then flush crimson.

Mr. Baldwin, leaning on a stick, seemed to be watching the ceremony at the monument. This took ten minutes or so, when the procession re-formed, and marched solemnly out of the church again.

An old woman, one of the almshouse widows, left the doors open for the stranger, who remained behind.

Mr. Baldwin, who did not appear to be in any hurry, began to look round the church, taking the monuments one by one.

"I must wait till he comes this way and speak to him," said Ruth.

John Wybrow bit his lips, but said nothing. He stood upright, arms folded, in an attitude which might have meant defiance.

The old gentleman, adjusting his glasses, came slowly along the north wall, reading the inscriptions, and looking at the tombs. Ruth watched him with a smile of amusement.

"How surprised he will be to see me here," she whispered.

He was surprised. In his surprise he looked, when he came upon the pair, from one to the other, dropping his glasses.

"John! Ruth Warneford!" he said, "what is this? what is this?"

Ruth stepped forward with a pretty laugh. "You are in my church, Mr. Baldwin," she said. "I am organist here."

He looked more surprised than ever. Angry too.

"Explain this, John," he said, without answering the girl.

Then Ruth began to feel that there was something wrong.

"There is nothing to explain, sir," said John. "This is Miss Warneford, whom you know. She is organist at St. Ethelred's. I sing here in the choir."

"So," said Mr. Baldwin, "that is all, is it?"

John Wybrow hesitated for a moment. Then he stepped forward to where Ruth was standing.

"No, sir," he said; "that is not all. This young lady knows me by my name, but she does not know that I am your nephew—that fact I have never told her. She learns it now for the first time."

"You learn it," repeated Mr. Baldwin to Ruth, "for the first time?"

The words rang in the girl's ear like a warning.

"In your presence, sir, and in this sacred place, I venture to tell her, also for the first time, that I love her."

"That you love her!" repeated Mr. Baldwin. He took a seat on the steps of the pulpit, and looked at the girl with eyes of pity. "That you love her! Poor girl! Poor girl!"

"And in your presence I ask her if she will marry me. Ruth, dear Ruth, forgive this rough speech, but my uncle forces it upon me. I know your goodness, your patience, and your trials. Come to me, my darling, and forget the trouble in a husband's love. Ruth, come!"

He had taken her by the hand and would have drawn her towards him, but she looked in Mr. Baldwin's face.

"Your nephew?" she faltered.

"My nephew," he replied.

"Ruth, my darling, come!"

She might have gone—she might have taken that single step, and fallen upon the breast that was yearning for her, but for the look in the old man's eyes.

"Remember!" he said, solemnly.

Ruth snatched her hand from her lover.

"Do not remember," cried John, passionately. "You have remembered long enough. It is cruel to remember longer. What has the past to do with the present?"

"Everything," said Mr. Baldwin, sadly—"everything. Ruth Warneford, I do not blame you. It is not your fault that my nephew has met you. It is his that you did not know what kind of conduct his has been towards you."

"What conduct his has been!" repeated the young man fiercely.

"Ask that in ten years' time, if I am living, and if you have found time to reflect. Girl! between you and my nephew there stands a ghost—the shadow of a great wrong."

"Alas! I know it," sobbed Ruth, "I know it."

"There is no ghost. It is the dream of a morbid brain, dwelling too much on things long gone and forgotten," said the young man. "Ruth, come out of the shadows into the light."

"What was done by one of your blood eight years ago, separates you from me and mine unto the third and fourth generation," said the old man.

"What was done yesterday matters nothing to-day," pleaded the young man. "Ruth! do you think I have not known your story? Long the tale of George Warneford has been familiar to me—since I was a boy at school. What has it to do with you and me, and with our love?"

"It stands between you," said his uncle.

All the time Ruth looked steadily at the old man. There was no hope there, only a stern justice, before which she trembled.

"I have been kind to you, Ruth Warneford," he said; "what the world calls kind. But let that pass. Remember, however, that it pains me, even to hear your name pronounced. I shall not relax in whatever help you may want; but, I ask you in return—it is a little thing—to send this young man away."

A little thing! Why, all in a moment, when John took her hand in his, she knew that it was her life, her happiness, her all, that she was asked to give up.

She made no reply.

"The idle attachments of youth," Mr. Baldwin went on, still sitting judicially on the pulpit stairs, while the guilty pair stood before him, "the idle attachments of youth are quickly made and quickly forgotten. You will laugh at this in a month, Ruth."

"Ruth!" the other pleaded, "Ruth! remember our happy days together in this old church; our evenings at your home; the sweet talk that we have held together—are these to go for nothing?"

"What is love," asked the old man, "that it is to override the most sacred obligations, and make duty a mockery? Children, could you prosper with the memory of the past ever before you?"

"The past! Oh! the past! Let the dead bury its dead," cried John. "Ruth! if you will be mine, we will turn our backs on this city and its hateful memories; we will go to a new country where no one can reproach us; we will live where the firm of Batterick and Baldwin is not known."

"Think of it, young lady," Mr. Baldwin

said bitterly. "He is prepared to sacrifice his future and his own happiness, your future and your happiness—to say nothing of me—in order to gratify his whim. Yes, sir, a whim; the fancy for a pretty face. Pshaw, sir! what do you know about goodness? Do you think I don't know that this is a good girl? Do you think I should treat her like this if I did not know it?"

Ruth took the old man's hand. He stood up as if to receive her, and she laid her head upon his left arm; perhaps it was to hide her tears.

"My mind is made up," she said. "John, Mr. Baldwin is right. I can never marry you. Heaven knows that until this day, even when I did not know that you were his nephew, I never thought of marrying you or anybody. What I feel now—that matters to no one," she stopped herself proudly. "The disaster that fell upon me, eight years ago, is between us; we can never pass that barrier. Farewell, John, and try not to think about me any more—never any more."

"Ruth," he said, "hear me again. It is not my fault that this disaster fell upon you. It is not yours."

"No," she cried; "it is the will of heaven, and we must bear it."

He turned fiercely upon his uncle.

"You have robbed me of my wife, sir," he said, "and you have lost your nephew. This day I leave your firm. The partnership that I was to have had on my next birthday—that partnership, on which I hoped to marry the sweetest and noblest girl in all the world, you may give to whom you please. Leave your money where you wish. I will never see you or speak to you again, unless it be to take my bride from you." He walked half down the church, leaving the girl clinging to his uncle's arm.

Suddenly a thought struck him, and he returned.

"Ruth," he said, with softened voice, "in this sacred place, before this altar, I have one more thing to say. In the years to come I shall wait for you. This foolish fancy, the persuasion of this selfish old man, who would keep alive the miserable past to poison the present, who sacrifices two lives to gratify his revenge, will pass. I shall wait for you alone, till I hear that I may come. Remember, I can marry no one but you."

He waited a moment for an answer.

The girl left her hold of Mr. Baldwin's

arm, and moved to the altar. There she fell upon her knees and prayed. John Wybrow still waited. When she rose again her face was lit up by the light of the western window, which poured full upon her, by her hair lying loose about her head like an aureole, so that she looked as a saint might look.

"When what is impossible becomes possible, John; when George Warneford's guilt is changed into innocence, I shall be free to marry you. And not till then."

John Wybrow knelt at her feet and kissed her unresisting hand. Then he turned and strode out of the church.

"Brave girl! brave girl!" cried Mr. Baldwin.

"Leave me in the church," she replied faintly. "I go in and out of the vestry door; leave me here. I have to think—to collect myself a little."

The old man looked at her with eyes full of pity.

"Forget that headstrong boy," he said; "he will be sorry afterwards for what he said to you as well as to me. We cannot undo the past, Ruth, but we may fight it down. We must bear our punishment, but we may bear it worthily, until it becomes a crown of glory. You are a good girl."

He left her. And as he walked down the aisle Ruth might have noticed, had she looked up, that his form was bowed, and that he trembled as he went. But she did not look up. She stood still, clasping her hands before her; and, when the church-door shut with a clang, she fell down upon the steps weeping and sobbing aloud. The echoes of the many-raftered roof took up her crying, and from among the silent tombs, from the dim recesses of the darkening church, there arose a voice and a whisper as of the dead, who weep with one who weeps.

Then little Charlotte Lemire, who had been forgotten all this time, crept sorrowfully from her nook within the organ-rails and sat down beside Ruth's head, waiting.

Presently Ruth felt her little fingers about her, soothing and petting, and she looked up.

"Ruth, dear Ruth; oh! Ruth, what can I do?" cried the child.

"Nothing, Lotty." Ruth arose and put on her hat. "Let us go. Please tell nobody anything at home, only that Mr. Wybrow will not come here any more, and that I have got a headache and am gone to bed."

That Saturday night there was silence at the professor's. The violin was not brought out; nor was there any dancing; and the children were sent to bed early. Also Nettie and Lotty spent the evening, as did their mother, in tears.

CHAPTER VI. THE PROFESSOR LETS HIS LODGINGS.

It was almost two months after the dreadful day at St. Ethelred's, when the quiet of Yendo-street was disturbed by the clattering of a cab on the stones. It stopped at the professor's, and the occupants, consisting of a lady and gentleman, with an old man of seafaring aspect, knocked at the door.

To Madame Lemire's intense surprise, they asked for lodgings.

Lodgings! she remembered their first venture in that line of business, and went in search of the professor. The professor, then engaged in teaching the youngest, aged two and a half, his earliest steps, also remembered that disastrous episode in their life, and hesitated.

The lady, who was a young lady, spoke for the party.

"We are easily satisfied," she said. "We shall want three bedrooms and a sitting-room, but we require very little attendance. We will give you a reference to a respectable lawyer, and we will pay the rent for three months in advance."

The professor looked at his wife—here was a chance!—and the rent three months in advance! In five minutes the party was upstairs, and madame, with Nettie, was devising means of stowing away the displaced children.

Meantime the professor went in search of the lawyer referred to. As for his lodgers—who gave the name of Mr. and Miss Elwood and Mr. Croil—the lawyer knew all about Miss Elwood. The young lady's father had died in Australia, at the diggings. But his little house and garden, now in the centre of a city, suddenly became great, and sold for a large sum. Yes, Mr. Lemire might depend on Miss Elwood. It was odd that he named Miss Elwood, and never spoke of her brother; but that, after all, was nothing; and the professor went back with a light heart, and a full assurance of his rent for a whole year to come.

He found Miss Elwood sitting among the children, and at home with all of them; and it was very funny, the children said, that when Ruth came in she knew her at once, and said, "You are Ruth

Warneford," and then shook hands with her. Because, they said, how should she know Ruth, when she did not know Nettie?

In a few days the new lodgers were so far settled in the house, that they seemed to form part of the family. The elder man, Croil by name—who slept on the second floor, and took two of the boys to share his room, when he found that they would otherwise have to sleep on the landings—was clearly an ancient mariner. He dressed in navy blue, and wore a fur cap of curious and sea-going cut. He was a little man; with soft and dreamy eyes, of a light blue; and with a very quiet manner of speaking. He generally carried in his left hand a cake of tobacco, with an open knife in his right; and he cut the tobacco slowly as he went.

At regular intervals he smoked: once before breakfast, once after, once on the point of eight bells, once after dinner, once towards tea-time, and once after, once before supper, and once after. "But not," as he remarked to young Rupert Lemire, the eldest-born, "not to be for ever with a pipe in your mouth—as if you might be the stove of a lighter. That's not the way, my lad, for them as earns their bread upon blue water."

He used the pavement of the street—at such times as it did not rain—for a promenade or smoking-saloon; when it was wet, he betook himself to his own room—a place which the children soon learned to regard as the home of all unimaginable delights; and they called him, after the first day, Ben, by his special request. The last pipe of the day Ben took in the first-floor front, with the other new members of the party.

They were a quiet pair. The man, about thirty years of age, looked older, by reason of the scattered gray hairs in his full brown beard, and the crow's-feet round his eyes. Across his forehead nature, or some trouble, had drawn a long deep line; the hair had fallen from his temples, leaving a wide and open brow; his lips were flexible and mobile, but they were hidden by his heavy moustache and beard; his eyes were hazel, and had a dreamy far-off look, with a gaze as of one who waits and expects; his voice was low, and he spoke seldom.

His sister, unlike him in face—so much unlike him that you would not have been able to trace even a faint family resemblance—resembled him in one respect, that her eyes,

which were large, and of a hazel tint, had the same far-off look, and, in repose, gazed out upon space like her brother's, as if waiting and expecting. She was tall, and of such a figure as the Graces love; her head, crowned with its glory of brown hair, was of such a shape as Canova would have desired for a model; her face outlined as if by some poet, inspired with the sister art of painting.

It was a face born for mirth and gaiety; but the gaiety had gone out of it, and left it prematurely grave. A look of care dwelt upon it for ever, save when she turned her eyes upon her brother, and then the sweetest smile lit up her features, and effaced the lines of trouble round her mouth.

Observant members of the Lemire household made out, in addition to their personal note, a few other prominent facts as regards their lodgers. One was, that they seemed all three utterly careless as regarded their food. On washing days, that is, on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, when the mother of the family and the maid-of-all-work were engaged with the linen of the household, they accepted, not murmuring, as weaker brethren murmur, cold boiled mutton, with or without potatoes; they drank nothing but tea, coffee, or milk, except Ben, who, once a day, towards the evening, visited the nearest public-house, with an empty pannikin, which he brought back full. They went out, the brother and sister, a good deal in the day-time, and at night they always sat side by side, with joined hands, before the fire, looking into it. Ben Croil at such times sat with them, his legs gathered up under his chair, his head against the wall, sound asleep. Sometimes in the morning, too, the pair would sit silently for hours together. Once Rupert Lemire, the eldest son, heard the lady say, after one of their long silences:

"George, if Boston Tom is living anywhere in the world, we must find him. If he is dead we must find who and what he was."

And on another occasion, Nettie Lemire, going to make the lodger's bed, saw her on her knees by the bedside, in an agony of tears, crying passionately, "Oh Lord! how long?"

There was only one other thing remarkable about the new lodgers, which was the way in which Miss Elwood sought Ruth Warneford's society. Now, at this time Ruth was melancholy, by reason of her shattered love-castle, and would fain have sat in silence; but she could not decline the

invitations which Miss Elwood showered upon her, to dine with her, to take tea with her, to sit with her, to walk with her. And it was difficult to resist the kindness with which these invitations were offered, and the sympathy with which the girl was gradually encouraged to respond to these advances. Little by little Ruth found herself talking with Miss Elwood—Helen, as she called her—as if she had been her oldest friend. Besides, the room upstairs was a retreat from the chatter of the children, and a quiet evening with her new friends rested her after a day's hard work at teaching.

They got into the habit of sitting together, talking in a low voice to each other, while Mr. Elwood, a restless man, paced up and down the room in silence; and they talked as if he were not there, because he never spoke, and never seemed to listen.

And one Sunday afternoon Helen Elwood told the girl a thing which made her heart leap up, and brought such joy to her as she thought could never come again.

It was a very quiet Sunday afternoon. After dinner old Ben might be heard marching up and down the pavement of the street, on the sunny side, where the east wind was not felt. With him was Rupert Lemire, and they were discoursing—that is, Ben was discoursing—on ships, and storms, and sailors' lives afloat. Helen and Ruth sat by the fire, the latter lying with her head on the elder girl's knees. Mr. Elwood sat in the window, silent and grave, looking at the group of two.

"And you are quite alone, poor child?" Helen asked. "No brothers, no sisters?"

"I had a brother once," said the girl, colouring painfully. "But he—he—went away eight years ago, and I have never seen him since. Poor George—poor dear George!"

She laid her cheek on the hand of her new friend. Helen felt the tears fall fast.

"Do not speak of it, if it pains you," she went on, glancing at her brother, who sat rigid, pale, and with trembling lips.

"Yes, let me tell you all, and then you will not say that I have deceived you. Listen. We were so happy, George and I together—only we two, you know. In the evening he came home from the City and I used to make the tea, though I was such a little thing. There never was so kind a brother, nor such a good man; because

now, you see, I know what young men sometimes are. Oh, me! How cruel it all is to think of! For our happy life was suddenly stopped."

She paused a moment while Helen soothed and caressed her.

"They said he forged Mr. Baldwin's name, and robbed him of his money. How can I believe it, Helen? If it was true, what did he do with the money? And yet—and yet—I once went to a place that I heard of in the City, and looked in a file of *The Times* till I found the report of his trial; and it was all so clear! He must have done it. And still I cannot believe it of my brother; for he was so steady and so true.

"And you have never heard anything of him at all?"

"Never anything at all," the girl said. "I do not know where he is, or if he is living."

"His name was George—George Warneford?" Helen replied slowly. "My dear, I think I can tell you something—not much—about him. And that little is good. There could not be two George Warnefords in Sydney at the same time. It is three years ago and more that I knew of a prisoner of that name—he was a young man of five-and-twenty—"

"George's age—he is ten years older than I."

"A prisoner for forgery—"

"Yes, yes."

"Who obtained his release and a free pardon for a noble deed he did."

"Oh, George—my brother—tell me what he did."

"He risked his life to save the lives of others; there was mutiny in the prison, and murder. Desperate men, made more desperate by the knowledge that their revolt was hopeless, had the lives of the prison warders in their hands; in a few minutes it would have been all over with them. This prisoner—this brave man who was convicted by a unanimous jury, after five minutes' consultation, for a wicked and treacherous act, my dear—faced almost certain death to save them. He did save them, and they released him for his reward."

Ruth seized her hand and kissed it.

"Go on, Helen; tell me more."

"I have very little more to tell you. But if it will comfort you, I can tell you what the prison doctor said to him when he left. He said, Ruth, that his trial showed the clearest case against him that ever was

made out against any man, but that his life and character belied the circumstantial evidence. He said he believed him innocent."

Ruth gave a great gasp.

"Innocent? Oh, if it were only so; what would matter all our sorrow and all his suffering, if only he were innocent?"

"Mind, George Warneford always said that he was innocent. The doctor was the first to believe it. Afterwards, I have heard that others also believed him innocent."

"Why does he not write to me? Why does he not come home to me?"

"Perhaps he does not know where you are; perhaps he does not know how you would receive him. For, Lizzie, your brother has lost the most precious jewel of life—his honour."

"But since he is innocent—"

"How does he know that his sister loves him still? Who has written to him out there to tell him so?"

"Can I ever cease to love him? Oh, Helen, if he were to stand before me this very moment, and hold out his arms, I should be more happy than I have been all these eight years that I have lost him."

In the window, in the shades of the early December evening then darkening the room, the very man of whom they spoke sat still and upright. But his hands trembled, and his face was distorted by some violent passion. Helen looked towards him and made a gesture of invitation. But he shook his head. Then she spoke again to the weeping girl.

"If he came to you a beggar in reputation, an outcast of society, heavily laden with the weight of these years of disgrace—"

"Unmerited disgrace," she said.

"With nothing to say to you, but that he was innocent—you would love him and cling to him against all the world, against Mr. Baldwin, against the kind people of this house?"

"Ah!" said Ruth, "I have but one brother. You have told me that he is innocent and brave. I am proud of my poor brother."

"And if he came to you, bearing in his hand the proofs of his innocence, what then, Ruth?"

"It would be too much happiness," she sighed. "Helen, why have you sought me out to tell me this story. I know—I know—that you are keeping something

back. You have come to this poor lodging to see me—me. I am sure of it. You have come with a message from my brother. Tell me all—tell me all.”

“Yes, dear, you have guessed. We have come—my brother and I—from Australia, to see you. We come in your brother’s name, and in your brother’s behalf. We have a task before us—to establish, if we can, his innocence. There is but a slender, a very slender hope, of our doing that. But, oh Ruth! believe it with all your heart; cling to it as to an anchor; thank God for it every morning and every night. He is innocent—George Warneford did not commit this wicked thing. We are trying to prove it, but we may not succeed. And whether we succeed or not, you shall be restored to your brother.”

Ruth was silent again—thinking. Then she lifted her eyes, bright with tears.

“You know him, then?”

“I know him, dear Ruth.”

“Tell me what he is like.”

Helen glanced at her brother.

“He is greatly changed from what you remember him. To begin with, he is eight years older, and he has suffered. You would not know him. Try not to fancy what he is like, but think of him now and always as a good and honourable man, who has had to endure a grievous wrong.”

“I will—I will. And, Helen, why do you and your brother try to do him this great service?”

Helen did not blush as she replied, taking the girl’s face in her hands and kissing her:

“Because, my dear, I love him, and I hope to be your sister.”

“My sister? You will marry him? And he loves you? Oh Helen!”

“Yes,” she replied, looking at her brother; “he loves me. The most patient, the most deeply-injured, the most honourable man, the kindest and noblest heart in all the world, loves me. Ought I not to be a proud and happy woman, dear? And you must love me too.”

Ruth threw herself into her new sister’s arms, crying and laughing. It was too much for her, this great and new-found happiness.

“Hush, dear! Hush, my dear,” said Helen. “I have told you too suddenly. There—lay your head upon my shoulder and calm yourself.”

She went on talking in a soft voice at intervals.

“We must keep our secret to ourselves. Not even the professor must know. Only you and I must work at this difficulty ourselves—you and I, and my brother; we three. I will tell you, to-morrow, what we have to find out, and you must help us. We shall be very happy in the years to come.” She looked again at her brother. “You and I, and George—all three together. Happy, whatever happens; happy, if we have to keep all to ourselves the knowledge of his innocence; happy, if the world never restores to him his honour again. We must live for one another, dear. You must think of meeting him, Ruth, as if you were meeting a soldier coming home from victory. For he has had a fierce fight, and has escaped unwounded. He has been in the very depths of sin, among the most evil men in the world, and has come out pure of heart. We are here, we three, to win back his honour or to sustain him; and you will do your part?”

As the girl lay with her face buried in Helen’s bosom, and her arms round her neck, the man in the window rose and stepped noiselessly to bend over the pair, his eyes full with love. Helen turned her face upwards and met his lips with hers, while with a hand that trembled he stroked the long hair which lay on Helen’s shoulder, and belonged, not to her, but to Ruth Warneford.

Then began a cling-clanging of the City bells for evening service. From almost every street there came the ringing, loud and discordant, or sweet and musical, of the multitudinous City churches—a voice of invitation to tens of thousands where there were only hundreds to hear it.

Then Ruth lifted her head, and rose. She looked about her strangely, trying to bring her thoughts back to their usual channel.

“I must go to church,” she said, “I play the organ at St. Ethelred’s. I must go to church.”

She did not look fit to go to church, for her eyes were dazed, and her hands trembled.

“I will go with you,” said Helen. “Let me play for you to-night.”

“Yes, yes,” the girl cried, “we will go together. I shall be able to play as soon as I begin. The organ soothes; and we will pray together, you and I, side by side, oh my sister! for George.” She turned to the man. “You will come too, Mr. Elwood, will you not? You know him, and you

love him, or else you would not have travelled all this way with Helen. Come with us to the church."

"I will come," he answered. Why did he bow his head, and sink upon a chair?

"My mind is full of my brother," Ruth said; "George is everywhere to-night. I heard his voice in yours, Mr. Elwood; his voice that I thought never to hear again. Let us go to the church."

CHAPTER VII. THE MISSING LINK.

It had been easy for Helen Elwood to find Ruth Warneford, for happily, the people with whom George Warneford had once lodged were still in the same house, and knew whither the child had been taken. Also the position of the place suited them better than any other could have done, for they were near the Docks, and it was at the docks—either of London or Liverpool—that they hoped to find some clue to the men of whom they were in search. Where Mercantile Jack mostly finds his way, there Ben Croil told them they would some day or other light on one of the mutineers of the *Lucy Derrick*. "Granted," he said, "that they got safe ashore—which isn't likely for a set of drunken swabs—they would make for the diggings; and, after a spell there, get back one by one to the port of Melbourne, and so on board again, and make their way to London." It was a slender chance, but it was their only one; and so old Ben went down regularly every day, and hung about, boarding the ships as they came in, and stepping forward for a look round; but he never found any of the *Lucy Derrick* men. When Ben was not hanging round the St. Katherine, the *Victoria*, or the London Docks, he was to be met with in the neighbourhood of Limehouse, Stepney, or Poplar, and, in the evening, he would be seen as far afield as Ratcliff-highway, always going round with his cake of tobacco in one hand and his knife in the other, whistling away, and looking about with his mild blue eyes, to see how they got along on board without him. On board the ships he always asked after a roll of names, which he carried in his pocket, but knew by heart. The list ended with the name of Boston Tom. Some of the men were known, but they had not been seen or heard of for years; but no one knew anything of Boston Tom.

One day as Ben was cheapening a bandanna in the High-street of Whitechapel

—the part of London where that costly article can be most readily obtained—there passed him a long, lean, and slouching lad of sixteen. The boy was going slowly, with eyes bent on the ground. Ben dropped the bandanna, and seized Rupert, who generally accompanied him in these excursions, by the arm.

"Now," he said, "if you want to do a good turn for Miss Warneford, you've got a chance. Step behind and follow me. I know that boy; and he won't, likely, tell me what I want. If I leave him, you follow him quietly. Find out where he goes, and where he lives. Don't let him out of your sight for a moment; and if it's a week, you go after him; and you stay with him."

"Ay, ay," said the mercantile-marine aspirant; "I understand."

"Got any money?" asked Ben.

"How should I have any?" returned Rupert the penniless. "Did I ever have a shilling in my whole life?"

"Five shillings will do," meditated the sailor. "There would be suspicion if it was more. You follow him up, and stand drinks to the extent of that five shillings; and find out somehow—without asking, you know—where Boston Tom may be. 'Boston Tom,' mind—that's the name you've got to stick to. That's the important thing. Now drop behind, and watch."

The old man hurried after the youth, who was now a dozen yards ahead, and, catching up with him, put his hand upon his arm, holding that limb tight.

"Ship-boy of the *Lucy Derrick*, Dan'l Mizen. I've lighted on you at last."

The lad turned ashy pale, and tried to drag his arm away.

"You—Mr. Croil! Oh Lord!"

"Ay, my lad, and glad to set eyes upon you again. No, Dan'l Mizen, you don't get away from me. See that bobby over the way? I've only got to call him; and it's murder on the high seas."

"Oh don't, Mr. Croil!" he whispered; "don't talk in that awful way. I was down below all the time, I was; and I give you information, I did."

"You did; and what I always says to myself is this: 'Young Dan'l,' says I, 'give that information, and it come in handy. When the trial comes on, if I'm there I shall up and let 'em know that the information was given, and how handy it come in.' Your neck's safe, my lad, if I'm there. If not, why, then, o' course you'll have to swing with the rest."

"The rest!" echoed Mr. Mizen, with a half laugh. "There ain't any rest."

"What! All gone but you?"

"All gone but me and Bost—and one other of the crew."

"Swear to that, boy; and if you tell me lies, I'll rope's-end you till you'll wish you'd never been aboard any ship in all your life; that blue you'll be all over."

The boy, whose face showed him to be what he really was—the most arrant cur and coward in existence—burst out blusterously, "Rope's-end me, will you, Mr. Croil? Wait till you try that game on."

"Ay will I! And I'll begin on the spot, if you jaw me. Why, you dirty, measly— There, go on with your story! All the pirates is drowned, then? Pity, too!"

"I'll tell you all the truth, Mr. Croil—s'help me, I will. We lost in the fight—that is, they pirates and mutineers lost—eight men in all, out of five-and-twenty; that left seventeen, and six of them were wounded; that left eleven. Well, they used me orful, they did. All your latherins, Mr. Croil, was pancakes and plum-duff compared to the latherins I got all round from them devilish murderers. Things went bad with the navigation too, and they couldn't keep her no course nohow."

"Lubbers all!" said Ben. "Go on, my boy; steer as truthful as you know."

"Then we got weather; and then, you see, we had to take to the boats. There was two boats, but one stove in; then there was only one left. We hadn't time for any provisions; and after the fifth day they began to eat each other. Gawspel truth, Mr. Croil!"

"Sarved them right! Worse than being hanged. But I'd rather ha' hanged them."

"Last, there was only left four of us."

"One of them four was Boston Tom?" said Ben.

The boy hesitated.

"Well, one was—I remember now—one was; but he was nearly dead when we were picked up; and he was one of them two that died two days afterwards."

"That's a lie," thought Ben; but he said nothing. "So, now, only two are left," he asked, after a pause. "Who may the other be?"

"He was Maltese Dick, Mr. Croil," the boy replied very quickly. "Him with the black hair and the arm tatooed all over; and where he's gone I don't know, and can't tell you."

"Ay, ay! And where do you live now, you Mizen boy?"

"I've left the seafaring trade, sir. I'm just come up to London to look round like; got no home to go to yet."

There was a malicious twinkle in the young man's eye as he spoke. Ben looked up quietly—he still held him by the arm—and watched him.

"Then you don't live anywhere handy about here?"

"Laws, no, Mr. Croil! Certainly not, not by no means. Whatever made you go for to think that I would live about here?"

They passed, at that moment, a low sort of lodging-house and sailors' tavern, with a bill in the window: "Lodgings for single men and mariners."

Unless Ben Croil was grievously deceived, the lady at the door of this hostelry made a sign of recognition as the lad passed.

"So," Ben thought, "that's the crib, and that's where Boston Tom is to be heard of."

"Well, Dan'l Mizen," he said aloud, "you'll find me most days down at the Docks. You mind, come to see me, and no harm shall happen to you; you forget to come, and as sure as my name's Ben Croil, you'll swing for your share of the Lucy Derrick mutiny. Swing is the word, Dan'l Mizen!"

He made mental note of the house and number, and turned back.

Mr. Mizen looked after him, with a countenance full of perplexity and dismay; and, after first scratching his tousled head, and then shaking it ruefully, pursued his own way in the opposite direction, with a dejected, not to say a hangdog, expression in his very shoes. Presently there passed him a lad of about his own age, dressed in blue flannel, and looking—although the flannel was shabby—a gentleman. He had long legs and a springy walk. As he went along—sometimes a little ahead and sometimes a little behind Mr. Mizen—he stopped occasionally, and looked about him, as if in search of something. Mr. Dan'l Mizen contemplated this waif—a gift of Providence, evidently fallen quite into his hands—for a quarter of an hour or so; and then, Mr. Croil being well out of sight, he shouldered up to the stranger, and jerked out, looking the other way:

"Lost your bearin', mate?"

"That is it," replied the stranger; "lost my bearin'. I was told by a party in the

country that I was to come to a house in the Whitechapel-road—but I've forgotten the number—where they'd take me in, and do for me, and find me a ship."

"That's lucky, now!" said Mr. Mizen. "Why, I'll take you to the very place, and it's close by; you come along o' me."

Daniel Mizen led the way. Oddly enough, his steps took him to exactly the very house where Ben Croil had noticed the lady at the door, and had remarked besides that she seemed to know his young companion. It was indeed the truth that the ex-ship-boy lived in this place of resort. How he lived, on what honest industry, or by the exercise of what native wit, was not immediately apparent.

He conducted Rupert to the door, and introduced him to the landlady—a woman with a red face, and dressed in a cotton gown, looped up so as to show a rich amplitude of petticoat underneath. She stood, with arms a-kimbo, contemplating human nature as it passed with eyes of hungry defiance. Men and women walked along, children ran by, but they were not her prey. Of all kinds and conditions of men, Mother Flanagan—not an Irishwoman by birth, although of illustrious Irish descent—loved a sailor, and especially him of the mercantile marine. She extended her affection beyond the narrow limits of party and country, embracing in one comprehensive sweep, and gathering to her breast, Englishman, American, Negro, Lascar, Malay, Greek, German, or Norwegian. All alike were dear to her, and she was dear to them—in the long run, very dear. She housed her favourites; she provided them with food, society, amusements, and drink; and when they left her hospitable house, it was, the censorious said, with empty pockets, and with "coppers" so hot, that it took a week of sea-breezes and compulsory temperance to cool them.

"Yes, I can take him," said Mrs. Flanagan, "if the young gentleman will pay a deposit."

"I've got five shillings," said Rupert.

"Hand it over," said Mrs. Flanagan.

"Mrs. Flanagan," called a voice from the inside room, "send that boy in here, five shillings and all."

The voice was hoarse and strained; it was followed by a chest cough which lasted long enough to tear the patient to pieces, and also was followed—a thing which was quite natural in that horrible den—by a volley of oaths.

Rupert Lemire thought himself in very

queer company, but he reflected that they would not probably murder him for the sake of five shillings; and he obeyed the invitation to enter the house. By the fire, in a low room, reeking with tobacco, there sat in an arm-chair, a man of singular appearance. He was decorated with a scar on the right side of his mouth, which made it look as if it had been twisted up on that side. He had bright black eyes, very close together, and a long, receding forehead; his face was smooth and hairless, and his cheeks were hollow and sunken. His empty pipe lay beside him on a table, which was also graced by a half-emptied glass of rum and water.

"Come in, youngster. What's your name? Where do you hail from? What do you want? Now then!"

Rupert thought of the initials on his handkerchief.

"My name is Robert Lumley," he replied, with a little hesitation, taking a name which belonged to the family butcher—an importunate person, who was always bringing sorrow upon the household by demanding payment. "I come from—from Manchester, and I want to go to sea."

"How much money have you got?"

"Five shillings."

"Give it to me to keep for you. I live here. This house belongs to me, not to Mrs. Flanagan. I'll take care of your money for you. I hope it's honestly come by. We're very particular in this house, ain't us, Dan'l Mizen?"

Daniel made no reply.

"And if we can't get you a ship all at a day's notice, young shaver, I suppose you could find some more money by writing for it, couldn't you? Guess you'd better come to me for advice. Five shillings, you see, it won't go fur. Two days, or, thereabouts, if you don't drink. To be sure there's the 'long-shore' clothes; you can make a good swap out of them, and nick a trifle into the bargain."

He had another fit of coughing, followed by another volley of oaths. Then he proposed a game of cards, and they sat down to a friendly hand of all-fours, in which Mr. Mizen took a hand. Rupert was not astonished when, after half an hour or so, he was informed by the man with the cough that he had lost all his money.

"Five shillings," said the host, jingling the two half-crowns. "It's a trifle, but there, it's something to pass the time. Young feller, you've cleaned yourself out

pretty sharp, you have. You'd better write that letter for more money at once; nothing like coming to the point. You, Dan'l Mizen, go and fetch the ink, and some paper. S'pose you've got a father?"

"Yes."

"And a mother? Yes? That's good. I like a mother. We'll pitch it strong. You just write what I tell you, and nothin' else."

The paper having been brought, Mr. Pringle—for this, Rupert had learnt in the course of the game, was the gentleman's name—proceeded to dictate: "'My beloved parents.' Got that down? 'Beloved and justly offended.' No; easy a bit. Let me think. Now then, 'My beloved parents, I made my way up to London after leaving home, and arrived here yesterday. I am deeply sorry for the trouble that I have caused you in running away, which I intended for to go to sea, but am now fully persuaded of the folly of my conduct, and will go back home, to do what you please. I am staying with truly Christian people, and have spent my all. If it were not for their charity, I should now be starving. I owe them two pounds already, and shall want three more to get my clothes out of pawn, which I am in rags, and to get home again—third class parliamentary—which is better than I deserve. So please send me a post-office order for five pounds, payable to Thomas Pringle, at the Whitechapel post-office, the same to be called for. Your affectionate son, Robert Lumley.'"

This was Mr. Pringle's dictation. The following, however, is what Rupert Lemire really wrote:

"DEAR OLD BEN,—I'm in the queerest crib. They've robbed me of my five shillings, and a fellow here thinks I'm writing for five pounds more to my parents in Manchester. What a game! My address is 1344A, High-street, Whitechapel, and my name is Robert Lumley, but you must not write to me. The name of the proprietor of the crib is Thomas Pringle. He is a cut-throat-looking villain, with a scar on his right lip, and two eyes close together. If he had any hair on his face he would be like a wolf. I like the fun.—Yours ever, R. L."

"Is it all wrote?" asked Mr. Pringle.

"Yes," said Rupert, quickly folding and placing the letter in an envelope, the only one on the table.

"Let me look at it."

"Can't, now it's folded and gummed up;

give me a penny for a stamp. I say, Mr. Pringle, what fun it is; what shall we do with the five pounds?"

"We'll have a spree, my boy, you and me together, in this blessed little crib. Now go and post your letter, and come back when it's done. You can't get into no mischief because you've got no money."

That was true; but Mr. Mizen, nevertheless, seemed to think it desirable to attend him, unobtrusively, to the post-office, and to escort him, after the letter was duly posted, back to No. 1344A. There they found some sort of a meal in active progress, and two or three other guests, although the appearance of the food did not, as in some circles, cause the disappearance of the tobacco. On the contrary, those who had fed, or who were about to feed, went on smoking; those who were feeding kept their pipes by them, and between helpings attended to the preservation of the spark. The cloth removed, so to speak, every man ordered what liked him best, and the evening sports set in with the usual severity. Other guests arriving, of both sexes, the tables were cleared away, and dancing began.

Rupert sat quietly enough, watching and listening, until the fiddle began. Presently his legs began to twitch. An elephantine performer was occupying the floor with a step made up of the cobbler's dance and the sailor's hornpipe. Rupert stepped up to him.

"Let me show you how to dance," he said, smiling superior.

He did show them how to dance a hornpipe; then he showed them the sword-dance with the poker and tongs; then he executed a figure all of his own invention, in which he lifted his legs over the head of every lady and gentleman present, to their unmixed joy and rapture; and then, snatching the fiddle from the hands of the inebriate musician, he threw himself into his place, and played a country dance for them till they danced as if they had been the rats of the Pied Piper himself.

Never before had Mrs. Flanagan witnessed such dancing, such excitement, or such thirst.

Said Mr. Pringle to the worthy landlady, upon retiring to rest: "The boy's worth a mint of money. We'll keep him. When he gets an answer to his letter I'll fix him up right away. There shan't be such a house as this not this side of Lime-us. There, old gal!"

CHAPTER VIII. HELEN PLAYS A TRUMP.

"THERE was a fellow-clerk at the office," said George Warneford, after reading Rupert's letter, "named Samuel Pringle; I remember him well."

"A fellow-clerk!" cried Helen, "and of that name. What kind of man was he?"

It must be owned that, in the further examination of the Warneford case, by far the most intelligent and active investigator was Helen Elwood. Whether his long confinement had dulled his brain, or whether he despaired of success, George Warneford himself was mostly irresolute, and sometimes, as if a cloud rested over his brain, he was silent and apathetic.

"Try to think, George, what manner of clerk was he."

"We were in the same room," said George. "He was my junior by a few months in point of years, but he had entered later. I do not know what his family connections were, nor anything of his habits, because he lived in a different part of London—somewhere up the King's-road, I think; but I know his name was Samuel Pringle."

"George, if this Thomas Pringle, whom the men called Boston Tom, knew your face—if he knew your story—if he knew, as he said, who did the thing—what other clue is more ready than the connection of Samuel Pringle with Thomas Pringle? And if Thomas knows, then Samuel knows as well."

"I believe you've got it, miss," said Ben. "How can we find out about this Samuel Pringle?"

"They could tell us at the office; at least they could tell us if he is there still," said George. "But who is to ask?"

Helen thought a little.

"I will go," she said, "I will go and see Mr. Baldwin myself. George, we had better take Mr. Wybrow into the same confidence as your sister; with Rupert and John Wybrow both working for us we ought to do something."

George sighed.

"Have faith, dear friend"—how many times had poor Helen said these words, as much to strengthen her own faith as to sustain his—"have faith and hope. We are nearer now than ever we were before. We have found out the man who knows, and now we have only got somehow to make him confess."

Rupert's letter arrived of course in the evening. Helen Elwood had a busy time. She had first to represent to the professor

and Madame Lemire that their eldest-born, though he would not return for a few days, was in reasonable safety, and might be expected to take care of himself, and was engaged in a matter requiring secrecy and confidence, which might be of great advantage to Ruth. She had to calm down the boiling fury of old Ben, who, now that his enemy was within his grasp, longed to bring him up, and saw himself, in imagination, reeling out the evidence that was to hang him. She had to find a correspondent in Manchester, a matter effected by means of a gentleman of the seafaring persuasion—friend of Ben's—who would send Rupert the five pounds asked for, with a suitable letter. She had to calm the eagerness of Ruth, who wanted a posse of constables at once to arrest the man, and make him confess then and there. Also George showed, when once he was alive to the situation, unusual agitation and excitement.

"I will go myself, Helen," he said, "to Mr. Baldwin."

"No, George, you will stay quietly at home; I can go, because I can talk without excitement. Let me go alone; keep quietly at home."

But all night she heard him pacing backwards and forwards in his room over her head.

The end at hand! It was too much to hope for; it was a thing of which he had never dared in his heart to look forward to. Much as Helen loved him, even she could not altogether understand the revolution of feeling which the new prospect of his rehabilitation caused him. After eight years of suffering and disgrace—after returning to England with an assumed name, in hiding, so to speak—after the agony of knowing that his sister was suffering with him and for him, and yet that he could not take her to his breast, and tell her who and what he was! And then another thing; he had schooled himself to expect disappointment. How was an eight-years'-old crime proved upon himself to be transferred to another man? How could the proofs be collected? From what quarter should they come? And who would put them together?

And now, suddenly, he was asked to face a solution in which the impossible was to be made possible. Within a mile of himself was the man who knew all about it. It only was left to discover if that man would be ready, or could be made, to confess.

Towards morning George Warneford dropped upon his bed and fell into a heavy sleep. Helen below heard his footsteps cease, and fell asleep herself. At nine o'clock he was sleeping still, when she set forth with a beating heart on her mission.

She knew the office of Messrs. Batterick and Baldwin so well, through George's frequent descriptions, that she knew the way right through into Mr. Baldwin's private room. She passed, unchallenged, and without hesitation, through the three rooms. The clerks looked up from their work for a moment at the strange apparition of a young lady in the office, but the young lady did not belong to them, and they went on with their writing. Helen turned the handle without knocking, and entered. Mr. Baldwin was alone at his desk.

"I am a stranger to you, Mr. Baldwin," said Helen, in answer to his word of enquiry, "and if I give you my name you will be no wiser. There is my card, however, and I will write on it the name of my lawyers for your reference, if you wish."

"Pray take a chair, young lady."

Mr. Baldwin read the card, and waited for further information.

"I will come to the point at once, Mr. Baldwin. I believe you had a clerk named Samuel Pringle."

"I have still."

"Is he a useful clerk—one whom you could trust?"

"Really, Miss"—Mr. Baldwin looked again at the card—"Miss Elwood, I hardly see my way to giving you the character of my clerks."

"Mr. Baldwin, believe me, I have no idle motives in asking that question; and if you will answer it I will tell you beforehand why I asked it."

"There is no reason after all," said Mr. Baldwin, "why I should not answer it at once. Pringle has been in my employ for about fourteen years. I once thought he would turn out a smart, active clerk, but he has disappointed me. He is not sharp, and he suffers from fits of nervous abstraction which will prevent his advancement in the world. But he may be trusted."

"Do you know his family?"

"We never take a clerk into this House without knowing his family."

"Then you can tell me if he has a brother."

"I daresay I could have told you years ago, but I have forgotten now."

Helen played her trump card.

"Would you allow me to ask him, in your presence, a single question? It is not impertinence or curiosity, Mr. Baldwin; indeed—indeed it is not. If you only knew how much depends upon that question!"

Mr. Baldwin touched a hand-bell. "Mr. Pringle," he said.

A moment later Mr. Pringle appeared. He was a tall young man, with stooping shoulders, and a quick, nervous way of looking about him. Also, as he spoke, his fingers played with whatever was near them. His eyes were too close together, which gave him a cunning appearance, and his forehead was long and receding.

"Pringle," said Mr. Baldwin, "this young lady wishes to ask you a question."

Mr. Pringle bowed; the lady's face was strange to him.

"I wish, Mr. Pringle," said Helen, "to ask you when you last heard from your brother Thomas."

The pale face of the clerk turned white, his fingers clutched convulsively at the back of the chair behind which he stood. He trembled from head to foot, his mouth opened but his tongue refused to speak.

Mr. Baldwin looked at his clerk with a kind of distress: what did it mean, this terror, at so simple a question?

Helen repeated it, never taking her eyes off his face.

At last he spoke.

"Not for five years or more. Tom went abroad."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No, I do not," he replied firmly.

This was a point gained. The man clearly did not know that his brother was in England.

"Had your brother any distinctive mark by which he might be known?"

The man hesitated.

"I cannot give information which may injure my brother," he said.

"Very well," replied Helen; "there are other people who may be injured by your silence; you had better think of yourself first."

The trembling began again; then he plucked up courage.

"I need not think of myself," he said, "not in that way, but Tom had enemies; however, there was a mark on the right side of his mouth—the scar of a wound he got from a knife; he may be known by that mark."

"Thank you, Mr. Pringle," she replied; "I now know all I want to know except

your address. I shall perhaps call to see you in the course of a day or two."

"That will do, Pringle."

Mr. Baldwin dismissed him, and turned to his visitor for explanation.

"I think it will be best to tell you something, Mr. Baldwin," said Helen. "Do you remember St. Ethelred's Church four months ago?"

"Surely."

"Ruth Warneford told her lover there, in your presence—that she would marry him when the impossible proved possible—when George Warneford's guilt was proved to be innocence."

"What has that to do with your visit to me?"

"Everything! Mr. Baldwin. I am here in England to make the impossible possible. I am here to prove a convicted forger a wronged and innocent man!"

Mr. Baldwin looked at her in silence. It was in a harsh, constrained voice that he answered:

"That is a fool's errand. Time was when I would have given ten years of my life to have proved George Warneford guiltless, but that time has gone by."

"We shall see, Mr. Baldwin," said Helen smiling; "meantime, do you want to know where he is now?"

"In prison, wretched boy, at Sydney."

"You have not heard, then—you have not read in the papers that he has long since obtained his release?"

"No."

"Shall I tell you for what reason?"

Helen told. In her narrative the heroism of her lover lost nothing. Her eyes sparkled, her voice trembled with emotion, her bosom heaved.

The old man, catching little of her enthusiasm, only sighed.

"Why do you come here," he asked, angrily, "to raise doubts when I had certainties? Why, if I had had the least, the smallest spark of hesitation about the lad's innocence, I would never have rested, night or day, till I had proved it."

"You would not," replied the girl. "Oh, I am sure you would not! But there was no room for doubt, and the plot was too deep; the accidental circumstances were too conclusive. But think, Mr. Baldwin, can you wonder, if you would have done all this for a doubt, that I—"

"But what is George Warneford to you?"

"He is to be my husband," she said.

"If you, for a mere doubt, would have known no rest till that doubt was cleared, what should I, his affianced wife, do who have no doubt, but a certainty—no hesitation, but a conviction, that my lover is innocent?"

She burst into tears, but only for a moment.

"Bear with me, Mr. Baldwin. You loved him once yourself; you will love him again yet."

She drew down her veil.

But the old man rose before her, his hands out, feeling, as it were, in the darkness for support.

"Tell me," he cried, "tell me—George Warneford innocent? Is it a truth?"

"It is a truth, Mr. Baldwin. It is the whole truth, and in a few days, with the help of God, who has helped us so far, I will give you the proofs of his innocence. Meantime give me, please, Mr. Samuel Pringle's address. Thank you; and help me further by taking no notice of what I have said, and by keeping to yourself all that has passed."

Mr. Baldwin promised.

An hour afterwards a messenger went into the chief. He found him sitting at his table doing nothing, looking straight before him. He spoke twice to him without getting an answer; and then Mr. Baldwin turned to him, and said, in an agitated voice:

"Innocent? Then God forgive us all."

CHAPTER IX. FULL CONFESSION.

MR. BALDWIN'S words were conveyed to the outer office, and, being curious and inexplicable words, were repeated among the clerks. To them the story of George Warneford was an old and almost forgotten thing, so that they did not connect it with Mr. Baldwin's expression. One of them, however, when he heard them, trembled and shook. He was so nervous and agitated that he could do no work that morning. His hands could not hold the pen. His mind would not take in the meaning of the words which he had to read, the figures danced before his eyes; and, amid the buzz of those who came and went, he heard nothing but the voice of Mr. Baldwin, which repeated, "Innocent. Then God forgive us all!"

Forgive whom? Samuel Pringle's cheeks were white, when Helen asked him for news of his brother; but his very lips were white when he thought of what these words might mean to himself.

Might mean? Did most certainly mean. There was no doubt in his mind at all that the young lady was come to Mr. Baldwin's about that old business of George Warneford's, a business which had ruined his own life and destroyed his peace. If the innocent man had suffered, much more had he, the guilty, endured tortures of repentance and helpless remorse. There was no way out of it now, except to confess and take the consequences.

He sat out the dreadful hours full of unspeakable terror from ten till one, and then, taking his hat, went out when his turn came to take his dinner.

One thought always comes to the guilty—the thought of flight. As he emerged from the office where he had expected all the morning to feel the hand of arrest, it occurred to him that he might escape. He looked up and down the crowded thoroughfare; no one, he thought, was watching him; he would hasten to his lodgings, pack up a few things, and be off, somewhere—anywhere—out of danger.

Excellent thought! He was a thrifty young man, who did not spend the whole of his small salary, and had a little money with which he would pay his fare to America. He would write to the office and say that he was called away on urgent business, but would be back in a week; then he would not be missed. Once in America—once on the way to the West, he would be safe from pursuit, and they might prove whatever they liked about himself and George Warneford.

Excellent thought! He lived at Islington. He took a cab, and drove to his rooms in hot haste, mad to be away from this dreadful fear which stung him like a hornet. And not only to be rid of this fear of detection and arrest, but also of the slow devouring fire of remorse, which had never left him for one moment, since the day when George Warneford was sentenced for a crime which he never committed.

So good and wise a plan did it seem to him, so practical and so original a method of shaking off the inconveniences of remorse, and anxiety, that, when he stepped out of his bedroom, portmanteau in hand, and saw who were waiting there to frustrate his manœuvre, he fell fainting on the floor.

His visitors were John Wybrow and the young lady he had seen in the office. For Helen lost no time. She drove

from Mr. Baldwin's straight to John Wybrow's chambers, and, in as few words as she could, told him what was necessary for him to know.

Said John Wybrow promptly, "I know that fellow Pringle. He is a cur and a sneak. I always thought he was capable of villainy, and now I know it. He is the man who did it; not his brother at all. Now, Miss Elwood, the first thing he will do is to run away."

"Run away!"

"Just that. They always do it, fellows like Pringle. He hasn't got the pluck to stay and brazen it out. The mention of his brother's name will make him suspect that the worthy Tom has let it all out. He will run away, and we must stop him."

John wasted no time in going to the office of Batterick and Baldwin, but drove straight to Pringle's address, rightly judging that, if he was going to escape, he would probably take the very first opportunity of getting away from the City. So it came to pass that, when Samuel had finished his packing, and was joyously bringing his portmanteau from his bedroom, he found this pair of conspirators ready to receive him, and the shock was so great that he fairly swooned away.

When he recovered, he found himself lying on the horsehair sofa which decorated his apartment. His head was dizzy and heavy, and it was some minutes before he remembered what had happened, and where he was. Then he sat up and realised the position.

"Innocent? Then God forgive us all!"

The words rang in his brain. Who were those who chiefly needed forgiveness? And by what suffering was that forgiveness to be arrived at? He clutched the head of the sofa, and groaned in his misery.

Before him stood John Wybrow, looking hard, stern, and pitiless, and at the table sat the young lady he had seen in Mr. Baldwin's private room, and her eyes too meant punishment.

"Now, Pringle," said Wybrow, "you have had a fright at the office; you have come here with the intention of running away to escape arrest; we have caught you in the act of packing your portmanteau; and we do not intend you to run away. Not yet."

The miserable man's lips were parted, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth.

"Not yet," repeated John.

"What—what am I to do? Why do you stop me? What business is it of yours?" asked Pringle, hardly knowing what he said.

"Surely you know what you have to do?" said Helen, in her low, steady voice.

Pringle shook his head.

"Here is paper." John opened a desk and took out some sheets. "Here is ink. Here is a pen. Will you write a full account of it, now, at once, or shall I send for a policeman?"

"Spare me!" cried the abject criminal. "Mr. Wybrow, what business is it of yours? Young lady, what have you got to do with an old story, eight years old? It all happened when I was a boy, very little more than a boy. I have never been happy since, not one single day. Is not my misery enough punishment? Other clerks can go about and be cheerful, and enjoy their victuals. But that thing never lets me alone, not once, not one single day. Why should I suffer more?"

It never occurred to his disordered brain that they really had no proofs of his guilt. He assumed at once that all was known, and they had the power of giving him into custody on the charge of forgery, aggravated by the fact that he had allowed another to be convicted of his own crime.

"We shall not spare you," said John. "We know now the reason of your nervousness and hesitation. Spare you? Samuel Pringle, of all men living on this earth, there is not one who is not worthy to be spared before you. In all the prisons in the world there is not a criminal so blackhearted as yourself. They have done the things for which they are in prison; you have not only done the things, but you have deliberately sent an innocent man to gaol for your crime."

Samuel buried his face in his hands.

"The convict's dress you have made George Warneford wear, you shall wear yourself; the misery you have brought on him, you shall feel yourself, and worse: the disgrace which lies upon him and his shall be transferred to you and yours. Your name shall be a byword of execration and reproach. People who bear it shall be ashamed to have such a name."

Then Samuel Pringle cried and wept; he rolled his head upon the pillow and wished he was dead; he moaned and whined, he declared that he repented, that he always had repented, that there was no man in the world more repentant than

himself; and then, because no answer came, but every time that he raised his eyes he met the relentless gaze of John Wybrow and the steady look of Helen Elwood, he crawled on his knees to the latter, and, seizing her hand, implored her to forgive him, and to let him go.

"You are a woman," he said. "Women are tender and pitiful. They always forgive. What good will it do George Warneford if the story does come out? He is out of prison. I learned that from my brother some three years ago. Tom saw him at Melbourne, walking about. It won't do him any good; and oh! think of what it will be for me!"

Helen drew her hand away, but made no response. What, indeed, could she say?

"Mr. Wybrow is hard and cruel. Oh, much harder than I should be if Mr. Wybrow was in my place." He looked up furtively at his enemy, who stood motionless, with the pen in his hand. "Many a time have I done Mr. Wybrow's work for him in the office, and said nothing about it. Speak to him, young lady. You've got a kind heart, I know you have. Speak to him for me. Tell him that I will go straight away out of London, and he shall never see me again, since he hates me so. Straight away at once I will go; and as for George Warneford, if he has got out of prison, what more does he want? Putting me in won't do him any good. Besides," he threw this out as a last shot, partly, perhaps, as a feeler, "besides, he's dead, I'm sure he's dead. Don't persecute a poor repentant sinner—don't be unchristian. Think of your own sins—not that you've got any, but perhaps Mr. Wybrow has—little ones, not big ones like mine—and then think how you'd feel if you had such a crime as I have weighing on your mind, and taking the taste out of everything you put into your mouth."

"Now, Pringle," interrupted John Wybrow, "we have had enough whining; stand up and write at this table."

Samuel obeyed, so far as standing up went. It was a groggy sort of standing at the best, and he felt, if he felt anything at all, that he hardly looked his best, for his long legs bent beneath him, his thin and sandy hair was hanging over his forehead, his lean arms hung helplessly at his sides, and his eyes were red and swollen. He looked at his portmanteau and at the door, but between the door and himself stood the stalwart form of John Wybrow. Samuel Pringle was neither a

strong man nor a brave man. If the thought of forcible departure entered his head it was dismissed at once.

"Sit down," said John, peremptorily.

Samuel sat down.

"Take the pen."

Samuel took the pen, and mechanically drew the paper before him.

"Now write."

"What am I to write?" he asked.

"Write the truth," said Helen.

"Write what I dictate," said John.

Samuel made a last effort.

"If I write," he said, imploringly, "give me a chance of escape afterwards."

Helen looked at John Wybrow. The criminal caught the glance.

"Only a single chance; give me a day to get away if I can," Pringle pleaded.

"Write first," said John Wybrow. "I will make no conditions till I have got a confession."

Pringle dipped the pen in the ink.

John began to dictate:

"I, Samuel Pringle,"

"I, Samuel Pringle."

"Will you kindly look over his shoulder, Miss Elwood?" John was trying to frame a form of words which should at least be binding. The difficulty was that he really knew nothing, and had nothing to go upon but his own strong suspicions. After a few moments of hesitation he began again. Helen stood behind the trembling clerk, on whose forehead the beads of agony gathered fast.

"I, Samuel Pringle, now a clerk of ten years' standing in the house of Batterick and Baldwin."

"Batterick and Baldwin," repeated Pringle.

"Declare and confess that the forgery for which George Warneford was tried, eight years ago, and sentenced to twenty years of penal servitude, was not committed by him at all."

"Oh Lord," groaned the writer, "'not committed by him at all.'"

"That he was entirely innocent of the offence; that it was committed without his knowledge; that he was wrongly found guilty; that the real criminal is still at large."

"Still at large," said Pringle. "Oh, miss, help him to stay at large. Help a poor, miserable, repentant man."

But Helen's face showed no pity. The abject nature of the man filled her with disgust.

"Still at large. That the other forgeries

and embezzlements laid to George Warneford's charge were one and all the work of the same man, who has hitherto escaped punishment."

"Escaped punishment!" the clerk echoed. "Oh, young lady, help him to escape altogether. It can't do George Warneford any good to see him punished. He's dead now. I know he's dead, else he would have come home."

"I further declare that the real forger——"

"I can't write it!" ejaculated the man.

"Mr. Wybrow, let me run away, let me escape, let me go this once. It's pitiful to have a giant's strength, sir, as Shakespeare says, and it's unchristian to use it. Oh Mr. Wybrow! what are we if we are not Christians?"

"That the real forger was myself, and no other."

Helen placed the pen in the nerveless fingers from which it had dropped.

"Write the words," she said.

"I can't, I can't. It's all true, as you know, Mr. Wybrow; but I can't write the words. I feel as if they were sentencing me to a prison."

"Very likely they will," said John.

"But confession is better than detection, as you will find. Come, you have no choice."

With a heavy groan he obeyed.

"Myself! Oh Lord! oh Lord! What have I written?"

"Sign it now."

Reluctantly he signed the paper.

"Now, Miss Elwood," said John, "we two will witness this signature."

It was Helen's turn to tremble when she signed her name as one of the witnesses. For what did it mean to her, this scrap of paper? The self-respect of her lover, the restitution of his good name; the recovery of all that made life dear; the bearing back to George of her golden sheaves; a victory worth to her all the other victories in the world!

She signed. The wretched man went on whining and pleading in the same key about repentance, about the wicked waste of trouble in raking up old matters, about the certain death of George Warneford; but his words fell unheeded on her ears. She was thinking only about the joy and thankfulness which should be theirs, when she bore back to George the paper so precious to them all.

John folded up the paper and laughed. "We have won, Miss Elwood," he said.

"You shall tell me afterwards, if you will, what you have won. You know what is my prize."

Then he turned to Pringle, and his voice changed:

"If I had words—if there were words in the language to express the unutterable loathing and disgust that I feel for you, I would use them. But, there are no words strong enough. You have signed, however. We have you now utterly in our power. If you are to expect anything at all from us—the slightest mercy—you will tell us the whole story without evasion or concealment. Out with it!"

"You will be merciful then?" cried Pringle, as he saw the paper folded in John's pocket-book, and deposited in a place of safety. "If I tell you particulars that you would not get from anyone else, you will have a little pity? Think of it, Mr. Wybrow, a whole life spent in prison. If I thought it would be only ten years, I should not mind so much. But a life! never to get out again; never to be free; never to do what I like; never to be without the dreadful convict dress! Oh, I've dreamed of it night after night till I know it all by heart, and the misery of it. Oh, Mr. Wybrow, be merciful!"

"Sit down again, and tell us, in as few words as you can, the whole history."

Does the story need to be told at length? The situation is known. A weak and cowardly lad, in the hands of his unscrupulous brother, was made to do anything. A cheque-book was purloined and kept in a safe place by Tom; from time to time, whenever the opportunity seemed favourable, a cheque was drawn with the name of the firm forged so skilfully, that the signature was passed without the slightest suspicion. Detection was difficult, because the crafty Tom took charge of the cheques; Samuel, needless to say, getting nothing of the proceeds, but obedient partly from habit, and partly from compulsion.

"But the cheque, the last cheque; how did that get into the envelope?"

"I put it there," said Samuel. "Tom told me to. I overheard Mr. Baldwin talking to the manager of the bank; I knew that the forgeries were going to be found out; I watched from where I sat; I could see Mr. Baldwin through a corner of the curtain; I saw him draw a cheque and place it in an envelope. That was the day before Warneford was caught. He left the envelope on the table. I put the last

cheque I had forged in another envelope exactly like his own. I made an excuse for going into his office—I changed the envelopes. Tom said it was the best chance to throw suspicion on somebody else. How should we know that George Warneford would be the one on whom it would fall? It was not our fault. We had to look out for ourselves—Tom and I. Mr. Baldwin locked up the envelope when he went away; he clean forgot who had been in his room; he forgot, too, that he left his desk for a moment when I was in his office, and he swore positively that no one could have touched that envelope, except himself and George Warneford. Tom was in court when he swore it, and when Tom told me in the evening, we laughed—that is, Tom laughed, till the tears ran down his face."

Helen made an involuntary gesture of disgust.

"He laughed, miss, not me. I repented. I repented at once, and the money—hundreds of pounds it was—that Tom had through me, never did him any good. I always told him it wouldn't. Oh, it's a dreadful story; and somehow, Mr. Wybrow, now that I've told you the whole of it, I feel easier in my mind."

John Wybrow whispered a few words to Helen, then he turned to the man again.

"Look here, you have told us, I believe, pretty well the whole truth. Of course we don't believe a word about your repentance, and all that. Repentance, indeed! But you have done us, involuntarily, a service. Now, in return, Miss Elwood, this young lady"—Samuel Pringle bowed, as if he were being introduced to her—"has consented to one act of grace."

"And the act of grace, sir?"

"The act of grace is this. You shall have twenty-four hours' start; after that time a warrant will be taken out for your arrest, and you will take your punishment if you are caught. The punishment will be heavy, and I sincerely hope you will be caught. Now, go."

He pointed to the door.

Samuel Pringle seized his portmanteau and vanished. Looking out of the window they saw him running down the street till he caught a cab, in which he drove away.

"There will be no warrant in his case, I suspect, Miss Elwood. We must now——"

"Wait a moment," she cried. "My heart is too full. Tell me," she said,

after a pause, "tell me, does this confession quite, quite free George from all suspicion?"

"It does. I am no lawyer, but I am certain that it does. It will at least clear him in the eyes of Mr. Baldwin and the world. Miss Elwood, you have helped me to a wife. Let us go to Ruth."

"Not yet," she said; "I want to get at the other man first, and I must wait. I want your advice and help. My brain is troubled with joy. Let us keep this thing to ourselves for one day yet—only one day. And to-morrow is Christmas Eve. Let Ruth keep that feast with a joyful heart."

"And I must not see Ruth till to-morrow evening?"

"Not till to-morrow evening, John Wybrow. If you cannot wait for four-and-twenty hours, what will you think of me when I tell you that I have waited for three years?"

"You, Miss Elwood!"

"Yes; George Warneford and I. That is my secret. You have won a wife and a sister too, because I am to be married to George Warneford."

John took her hand and kissed it. On second thoughts he stooped and kissed her on the forehead.

"You will be our sister?" he said simply. "I am very glad. Where is George?"

"He is here in London. That is another of my secrets. He is at the professor's with me—"

"In the same house as Ruth?"

"In the same house as Ruth, and she does not know. Once she thought she knew his voice, but it passed off. He is with me as my brother, so that we can travel together. Ruth does not suspect. But to-morrow she shall know."

John took her home. In the front room the gas was lit, for the professor was instructing a select class. Behind the blinds was Ruth, but John did not know this, and went away with a longing, hungry heart.

George Warneford was pacing the room impatiently. He stopped with a gesture of inquiry when Helen returned.

"Yes, George, I have seen Mr. Baldwin, and have talked with him, and—and— Oh! my dear, dear love, we who have waited so long, can we not wait a little longer?"

She fell weeping into his arms. He soothed her and caressed her, and presently she lifted her head and raised her eyes.

"Let us remember," she said, "the long and weary time of trial, and, with the remembrance, let us think of all that it has done for us; how it cleared away the clouds of anger and revenge which lay on your soul; how it brought you back to your better self, the man I learned to know; how it made me a little less selfish and a little more careful of others; how it brought me the dearest and best thing that can happen to a woman—the love of a good man!"

"Nay, dear," he said, "but the love of a man who would fain be all that his wife thinks him."

"Why, that is it," she said. "You think me fair and pure, and I try to be fair and pure of heart. I think you noble, and you make your own nobleness out of love for me. What is love worth, except to lead man and woman upward to the higher life?"

Then they were silent, and presently the old sailor stole in and joined them, without a word.

"George," she said, after a little—they were sitting, according to their old custom, side by side before the fire; Ben Croil was in his place, with his head against the wall—"George, what day is this?"

"It is the day before Christmas Eve."

"I remember that day three years ago, George. There were three people on a little islet together. It was a summer evening there, and they sat on the beach watching the golden sunset, as it painted the sands upon the beach and the rock behind them, where the white streamer floated night and day. They had been four months on that islet, where they were to be prisoners for three years. All their hearts were troubled with a sense of wrong. The older man was yearning for revenge upon the mutineers and murderers who had brought them there."

"He was," said Ben. "He's yearning still; but he's going to have his revenge before long."

"The younger man," said Helen in her soft low voice, "was longing for revenge on the man who had brought him to ruin. Was he not, George?"

"He was," said George.

"What does he think now?"

"He would leave him—to Helen," replied her lover, taking her hand.

"And Helen would leave him—to Heaven," she said. "The day before Christmas Eve, Ben—this is a time when we ought to put away all sorts of revenge."

"Ay, ay, Miss Helen, that's very true; bless you, I don't harbour no malice against no one—except Boston Tom. He's got to swing, then I shall be at peace with all mankind."

"We must forgive, if we can, even Boston Tom," she said.

"What! forgive a mutineer and a murderer, when I've got him under my thumb?"

The old man was inflexible on this point. That Boston Tom should be allowed to escape never entered his head. It was, if anything, a part of the great scheme of Christian forgiveness, that hanging should come first and pardon afterwards. And the knowledge that he had caught him at last, tended greatly to soothe his soul, and prepared him for a fuller enjoyment of that season when peace and goodwill are specially preached to the nations of the earth.

Helen ceased to urge her point. But another pleader took up the cause of Boston Tom. It was a second letter from Rupert, written in pencil and in haste:

"Whatever you have to do with this man," he wrote to Helen, "must be done quickly. I think he is dying. Last night, after drinking enough rum to float a three-decker, or at least one of old Ben's favourite craft, and after coughing till he shook the walls of the house, he broke a blood-vessel. We put him to bed, and he went on drinking rum. I was with him all night. I think, Miss Elwood, that I am getting rather tired of playing my part. The place is a den of thieves. The five pounds are already nearly gone, and the woman of the house is throwing out hints that more will be wanted before long. Also I am expected to dance all the evening to please the sailors. After all, there is some fun in showing these timber-toed lubbers what dancing really means. But I am afraid that Dan Mizen suspects me; he is always on the watch."

"R. L."

"P.S.—They have had a doctor to see him. He reports that the patient can't last more than twenty-four hours. The woman has carried off his clothes, and I caught her searching the pockets. Also Dan Mizen has been making observations about captures and such things. My own idea is that he is trying to make something for himself out of the man's death. Act at once if there is anything to be done."

Helen read this letter aloud and waited for a response, looking to George first.

He thought for a minute.

"If the man's testimony is to be of any use to us," he said, "it must be got at once."

"We can do without it, George, but we shall be stronger with it."

"Then I will go myself and get it out of him."

Helen turned to Ben. "What do you think, Ben?"

He was putting on his overcoat.

"Think?" he asked, with impatience glittering in his pale blue eyes. "What is a man to think? Here's the murderer going to cheat the gallows, and no one to interfere but me. Think? Why, that we must go to the nearest police-station and arrest him, dead or alive."

"We will go, Ben, you and I. No, George"—she put him back gently as he rose to go with her—"it isn't altogether my fancy, but I want to finish this work myself with Ben and our friends. I want you to remain where you are, unknown and unsuspected till the time comes."

"The time, the time! Oh, Helen, I cannot believe the time will ever come!"

"It has come, George; it is here already. Have patience for a single day—only a single day—and you will find that it has really come for you, and for Ruth, and for me. My heart is very full, dear friend; but the work is nearly done, and this night, please God, will finish it. Do not wait for me. I am safe with Ben and Rupert."

It was nine o'clock. As Helen opened the door a van drove up, and a man, jumping down, began to hand out parcels.

"Here you are, miss," he said. "Name, Lemire."

"I will call Madame Lemire. Please bring in the things."

The professor came, Madame being out on a little Christmas marketing.

"Turkey for Mr. Lemire—sausages for Mr. Lemire—barrel of oysters, Mr. Lemire. That all right? Case of wine, Mr. Lemire—box of French plums, Mr. Lemire—ditto ditto, boxes of preserved fruit—bon-bons—one, two, three, five; that's right. Very sorry, sir, to be so late."

"But these can't be for me!" cried the bewildered professor.

"Quite right, sir—quite right; ordered two hours ago; nothing to pay. Stop a minute! Pheasant for Mr. Lemire—wild duck, Mr. Lemire—cod's head and shoulder, Mr. Lemire."

"But, my friend, I have ordered none of these things."

"Didn't say you had, sir. Friend, I suppose, ordered 'em all. Christmas-time, you know. Hamper besides; don't know what's in the hamper. Where's that box, Jim? We was told to take very particular care of that box. Here you are, sir—box for Mr. Lemire. Think that's all, sir. You'll have to sign here—so—and here's a letter."

By this time Ruth Warneford, Antoinette, and the children were gathered in the little hall gazing at the treasures which lay piled one above the other, cumbering the way. The professor, balancing himself on his toes, gesticulated, laughed, and remonstrated. But before they knew what had happened, the man with the van had driven off, and they were left with their boxes.

"But what does it mean? Is it St. Nicholas? Is it the good Christmas fairies? Is it a gift of Heaven?" and the professor was helpless. "My dear young lady," he addressed Helen, "I assure you, on the word of an artist, that the resources of the establishment at this moment go no farther than the prospect of a leg of mutton, without plum-pudding, for Christmas Day. You will hardly believe me, but that is the fact; and my wife has now gone out with Gaspard in the hope of purchasing that leg at a reasonable cost; and here are turkey, sausages, oysters, pheasant, wild duck, wine—apparently champagne, vin de champagne!—French plums, fruits, cod-fish, bon-bons. Children, children, you are about to taste unheard-of luxuries. It is a return into Egypt."

"And the box, father. What is in the box?"

Ben produced that knife of his, which, when not in active service in cutting tobacco, was useful as a screw-driver, or a crow-bar, or a marline-spike, or a hammer, or as any implement likely to be required on board a sailing-ship. With the help of this he opened the box. The contents were covered with paper.

"Stop, stop!" said Nettie. "This is too delicious. Let us carry everything into the class-room."

All the things made a gallant show on the bare floor—such a picture as might have been painted and hung upon the walls of some great banqueting-hall. It would have been called Christmas Plenty in the Olden Time. The game lay in an inner circle, surrounded by the boxes of fruit and the cases of wine. The barrel of oysters formed a sort of tower in the

centre, and the children were gathered round the mysterious box, over which Helen stood as guard.

All was silence while she opened the first parcel.

It was wrapping in tissue paper, as costly things should be, and on it was a card, "For Nettie." Opened, it proved to contain a winter jacket of the very finest and best. The next was marked, "For Charlotte." That contained a brand-new dress, warm and soft; and so with all the rest. For the girls, dresses; and for each of the boys—the parcels being labelled, "For Gaspard, care of his father," and so on—a bank-note, white and crisp.

Never was such a Christmas present.

"But nothing at all for Ruth?" cried Nettie. "Oh, Ruth, it is a shame!"

"Had you not better read your letter, professor?" asked Helen.

"Ah, to be sure. The letter! the letter! Now it is strange that I should have forgotten the letter. Gaspard, my son, take the violin. So. Come, here is a letter, children."

Instead of reading it aloud, and at once, he began by solemnly taking Ruth's hand and raising it to his lips with the courtesy of the "ancien régime."

"Listen, children. This is all the letter:

"For those who love Ruth, and have been kind to her."

"That is all, children, that is all." The professor blew his nose. "Always a blessing to us, from the day when God's providence brought her to our home—always the sunshine of our house."

"No, no!" cried Ruth. "You have been my parents, my family—all to me."

"It is from her earnings," the professor went on, "from her poor earnings, that our Christmas fare was to have come, because, I confess to you, Mademoiselle Elwood, that art is not remunerative in this quarter. But, pardon, mademoiselle, you were going out when these grand things arrived. You have delayed yourself on our account."

"Yes, I have to go out for an hour. Come, then, good night, Nettie; good night, children all. I am sure you deserve all the good fortune that can befall you."

Ruth ran after her.

"Helen, tell me what do you think it means? Is it John? Do you think it is John?"

"My dear, perhaps it is John. Do you remember the promise in the church?"

"Do I remember? Ah, Helen, can I forget?"

Helen hurried away, but as she opened the door she heard the professor strike up a cheerful note.

"Now, children all! The joyful dance of the Happy round the Monument of Plenty. Mademoiselle Antoinette will commence. Where, oh where is Rupert?"

And when Madame Lemire returned bringing with her the humble leg of mutton, she found the children executing one of the professor's highest conceptions—a Pastoral Piece—round such a display of splendid things as even Leadenhall-market could not surpass.

CHAPTER X. BEN HAS HIS REVENGE.

OUT in the cold December evening Helen and Ben walked through the streets, crowded with the late buyers in the Christmas markets. The old man was silent, thinking over his baffled hopes of justice. It was a bitter pill for him to swallow. After all these years, in which every day brought before him in stronger colours the blackness of the treachery which lost the Lucy Derrick, and destroyed so many lives; and after finding his enemy, the last and worst of the whole mutinous crew, to learn first that Christian forgiveness might have to include even that desperate villain, and then that a more potent hand of justice than even British law was taking him away from his grasp;—all this was too much for the good old man. Helen divined his thoughts, and tried to lead them back to other matters. "You will be rejoiced, Ben, to see Mr. Warneford's good name restored, will you not?"

"Ay, ay, Miss Helen. Not that it makes any difference to him, nor to you, nor to me neither, in so far as my respects is concerned. Boston Tom is at the bottom of that villainy too."

"He was, Ben, and if he is on his death-bed we must forgive him that as well as the greater crime."

Ben made no answer.

They came into Whitechapel High-street, all ablaze with gaslight, and presently arrived at the house.

The door was open, but there was no one in the front room, where Rupert had been wont of late to entertain roystering Jack and his friends with an exhibition of his art. No one in the passage, no one on the stairs—all was dark and silent.

They waited. What to do next? and where to go?

Presently they heard a voice upstairs, and footsteps.

Ben listened.

"That's Master Rupert," he said. "Follow close to me, Miss Helen."

The room was lit by a single gas-jet, flaring high, like one of those which decorated the butchers' stalls outside. It was an old-fashioned wainscoted room, but the paint was thick with dirt, and the ceiling, which had once, perhaps, been whitewashed, was blackened with smoke and grimed with age. It was furnished with a low, rickety wooden bed, and with a couple of chairs—nothing else, not even a washstand or a table. And on the bed, propped up by pillows, sat Boston Tom. He was dying; his cheeks were white and sunken; the old wound at the side of his lip showed red and ghastly against the deathly pallor of his cheek; his hair lay over his low, receding forehead; round his shoulders was thrown an old pea-jacket; and in his trembling fingers he held a tumbler half full of rum.

He looked round and saw his visitors, with a curious smile.

"Ben Croil, is it?" he gasped; "old Ben Croil the bo's'n. Thought you was dead, mate. Thought you was cast away in the captain's gig—you and the young lady and George Warneford. Glad you're not; that makes three less—every little counts. Three less; bully for you, Boston Tom."

He raised the tumbler to his lips, and would have let it fall in his weakness, but for Rupert, his sole companion, who held it for him while he drank, with a look half of apology and half of recognition at Helen and Ben.

"It is all we can do for him now," he explained.

"Does he know it?" whispered Helen.

"Does he know his condition?"

The man, who had closed his eyes for a moment, opened them and bestowed a wink upon her which saved the trouble of speech.

How to address this man? How to touch with the slightest spark of human feeling a heart so callous and so seared?

Ben Croil saved her the trouble of consideration. He stepped to the foot of the bed and gazed steadfastly in the face of his enemy.

"At last I've found you," he said.

"Ay, mate, you've found me, and none

too soon. Guess I'll save my neck yet." He spoke with an effort, but there was the determination of keeping it up to the end in his face.

"Where's that rope you spoke about, bo's'n?" he went on. "Cheated you, after all. Boston Tom's booked. Look ye here, mate, all of them fellows is dead and gone, every man Jack of them. Some of 'em drowned; some of 'em cut up for food when we took to the boats; some of 'em food for sharks. Youngster, give me hold of that bottle." He took a pull at the rum and went on, after a fit of coughing which might have killed an ostrich. "Ugh, it's this cough that prevents me from talking; prop me up a bit more, boy. So, Ben, you're done this time."

"Say you're sorry, mate," said Ben, in whose mind, touched by the sight of the forlorn wretch, Helen's teaching suddenly sprang up full blown into charity. "Say you're sorry."

"What's the use of that?" asks the impenitent murderer. "That won't bring back the Lucy Derrick. Of course I'm sorry. Who wouldn't be sorry with nothing but the gallows or the black box? Sorry!" Then he turned to Rupert. "See, boy, you're a trump; you've looked after me when all the lot bolted; you're the one as has stuck to me these days, and never let me want for nothing. So I'll give you all I've got left, and that's a word of advice. If you go to sea, don't you go mutineering, and keep your hands from slaughtering captain and mates. Then you'll live to be a credit to your family."

"Are you sorry for nothing else, Thomas Pringle?" Helen asked.

"Lots," he replied. "Lots. Buckets full. But then Thomas Pringle is gone for many a year, and Boston Tom's took his place."

"In the case of George Warneford now, the man who escaped with me in the boat—"

"Ay, ay. I remember well, that was a bad job, that was."

"I know all about it," said Helen; "your brother Samuel told me."

"Did he now?" Boston Tom asked the question with an air of keen interest. "Did he really? I did use to tell him that, if he ever split on that job, I'd take him out some dark night—say Hampstead-heath way—and brain him; so I would have done too, three years ago. Suppose it's no use thinking of that now; can't be done."

"All about it," continued Helen. "Samuel forged the cheque at your instigation."

"So he did, so he did; that's a fact. I wanted the money bad, very bad I wanted the money at that time. Warneford got it hot, and I laughed."

"Samuel has written a confession of the whole," Helen went on; "but I want your confession."

"Then, my lady, you won't get it; so you may go away again, and leave me here till the time's up. More rum, my lad."

He lay back after this effort, and closed his eyes, exhausted. He opened his eyes again after a few minutes, and uttered, with great enjoyment:

"Catch a weasel asleep! If Sam has confessed, that's all you want; if he hasn't, you don't catch me napping."

"He has confessed indeed," said Helen. "Do you think I would bring you an untruth, now of all times in the world?"

He shook his head.

"There's one thing more to be said, Boston Tom," Ben struck in. "'Tis a small matter, this old forging business, and if Miss Elwood wants your name at the foot of a bit of paper, you may as well put it there. Murder's different, and, by George, if you don't do what she asks, I'll step out and fetch a policeman. If you can't be hanged, you shall sit in a cell without the rum."

"Give me another drop, boy."

"Let be, let be!" said Ben, interposing and snatching the bottle from Rupert. "Not another drop shall you have until you've made that there confession."

The dying man stretched out his hands with a gesture of despair.

"Not the rum!" he cried, "not the rum. Take anything away, but leave me that. You, boy; you're stronger than him; fight him for it; tear it out of his hands; make him give it up to you. Up, boy, and fight him!"

But to his surprise the boy joined his enemies.

"You shall have your rum," he said, "when you have signed the paper."

Then he lost his courage, and began to moan and whine exactly like his brother Samuel.

"I'll sign anything," he said, "if you will give me the bottle."

Helen wrote rapidly. She had all the facts, and wanted nothing but a simple declaration. In a few minutes she was ready.

"Listen, now. Tell me if this is all you have to say:

"I, the undersigned, believing myself to be dying, solemnly declare that the forgery for which George Warneford, clerk to the house of Batterick and Baldwin, was convicted, and sentenced to twenty years' penal servitude, was committed by my brother, Samuel Pringle, clerk in the same firm. I also declare that the whole of the forgeries, of which that was the last, were by the same Samuel Pringle. They were committed at my own instigation, and for my own profit; I had the spending of the money, and Samuel Pringle, my brother, never touched a penny of it. George Warneford knew nothing about it from the beginning to the end."

"That's about all," said Thomas Pringle. "I've nothing more to say; it's quite time; give me the bottle."

"Not yet," said Ben. "Take time—so! Now sign as well as you can."

Helen guided the fingers while the signature of Boston Tom slowly drew itself across the bottom of the page; then the pen fell from his hand, and Boston Tom's head fell back upon the pillow. For a while they thought him dead, but he was not; he opened his eyes and motioned for the rum, which Rupert held to his mouth.

"Leave me to the boy," he sighed wearily.

While they thus looked on at this miserable ending of a shameful life, there was a noise below, and steps were heard upon the stairs. The door opened, and Dan'l Mizen appeared; behind him two policemen.

"There he is, gentlemen," said the ex-ship's-boy eagerly. "There he is! That's Boston Tom, the ringleader of the murderers. And, oh! here's Mr. Croil, gentlemen." He turned to the policemen. "Bear witness for me I'm the first to give information. I'm Queen's evidence. I'm the one that came forward first."

"Thomas Pringle, alias Boston Tom," said one of the policemen, "I've got a warrant for you. It's mutiny and murder on the high seas; and remember, what you say now may be used against you in evidence."

Boston Tom raised his dying head, and looked about him, trying to recollect.

"It's all a dream," he said. "What's gone before in the dream? You're Bo's'n Croil; you are old Ben. I know you. There's Dan Mizen. We're all honest

men here, play fair and square, drink square and fair, pay up and play again. Pass the rum, my boy."

And with these words Boston Tom laid his head back upon the pillow and closed his eyes. They waited for five minutes. He did not open his eyes. One of the constables took his hand and felt his pulse. The hand was cold, and the pulse had stopped.

He had gone before another Judge.

CHAPTER XI. CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE next day was a day of mystery. Miss Elwood had a long talk in the morning with Madame Lemire and Antoinette, the result of which was a great crying of all three, followed by mighty preparations, the like of which had never before been witnessed in Yendo-street.

It was holiday with the professor; but he too, conscious of impending change, roamed restlessly from one of the two rooms to the other.

Ruth stole out after breakfast, accompanied by Charlotte, and took refuge in the church, where she had her organ to attend to till dinner time. When she returned, she too felt that it was a very curious and mysterious day. Old Ben, who, like the rest, was restless and disturbed, opened the door and poked his head in just to say, in a hoarse whisper:

"It is all right at last, miss. Heart up, pretty," and then he disappeared.

Nettie, too, came rushing up from the kitchen once in every quarter of an hour, just on purpose to kiss and hug her, and then, after a pirouette or two of wonderful dexterity, rushed downstairs again and disappeared.

And then the professor came and sat with her—the kind professor, her devoted friend. He too was silent and restless; he could not sit still, he fidgeted on his chair, he stood on his toes, he danced on his elastic feet from one end of the room to the other, and then, before finally dancing out—which he did after half an hour of this performance—he took Ruth's head in his hands, and kissed her on the forehead.

And when he was gone, Ruth felt that he had dropped a tear upon her brow. For everybody now, except the children and herself, knew the whole story. They knew now what it all meant, the mystery of all this coming and going; they knew now the reason why this mysterious couple, this so-called brother and sister, had sought

out these obscure lodgings in the unknown region of America-square. Helen, before going out on her errand of victory that morning, had told Madame Lemire the whole story. Therefore Nettie and her mother had a good cry, and cried at intervals during the whole day, insomuch that the grand culinary operations were as much wept over, as if they had been intended for the cold meats of a funeral banquet. They told Charlotte, and Charlotte, after telling Gaspard and Rupert, crept upstairs and sat on a footstool, with Ruth's hand in hers, thinking what a wonderful story it was; and then, because we all want to have a little of our own interest in everything, realised how dull the days would be without Ruth to cheer them up.

"Tell me what it means, Charlotte," said Ruth. "What is the matter with everybody? Is it on account of the mysterious Christmas present?"

Charlotte shook her head.

"Better than that," she said. "That means only feasting. Far better than that; something very, very good, Ruth—something that will make us all happy; because it will make you happy. Think of the very best that could happen to you, the very best, you know—not a silly wish, not something, you know, for to-day or to-morrow, but for always—and then be quite sure you will have it; and more—yes, more."

The afternoon dragged on, and the early evening brought blindman's holiday. Then the children came flocking in, to sit round the fire and talk, as was their usual custom, with Ruth Warneford to tell them stories. But she told them none that evening, because she was anxious and disturbed.

Presently, one by one, the rest came in. The professor, without his violin, balancing himself on tiptoe; Nettie and madame dressed as for some unusual ceremony, and with looks of great mystery. The boys came in too, Rupert and Gaspard—the former with folded arms and a certain melodramatic gloom, the latter bursting with the importance of having a real and wonderful secret to tell.

The elders tried to talk, but it was no use. Conversation flagged, and a damper was thrown on any more efforts by the sudden breaking out into sobs and tears of Madame Lemire. When Nettie and Charlotte followed, and all three fell to kissing Ruth and crying over her at the same time, the professor, followed by his

two eldest sons, retired to the class-room, whence presently issued the well-known strains of the violin, accompanied by sounds indicating that, with his two sons, the professor was seeking consolation in Art. As for the children, all this crying, with the house full of the most enjoyable and hitherto undreamed-of good things, seemed a kind of flying in the face of Providence; so that when, at six o'clock, a carriage drove to the door, it was a great relief. The professor returned and lit the gas, and the others formed a group involuntarily.

Helen was the first who entered, and she was followed by Mr. Baldwin and John Wybrow.

John Wybrow? Was it possible? Then this great thing was—was—

"My own dear, dear, dear Ruth," said John, quite naturally, holding her in his strong arms. "Don't cry, my darling. It is all right at last, and here is Mr. Baldwin to tell you so."

"We have done a great wrong, my dear," he said solemnly; "a very great wrong, and God forgive us for our hard hearts, and for our readiness to think evil. I am here to ask your pardon—very humbly to ask your pardon. Take her, John, and make her happy." He spoke as one deeply moved.

"And where, Miss Elwood, where——"

He looked round the room.

"Not here—come upstairs, Ruth dear, with me; Mr. Baldwin, and all of you—yes, all of you. Come, kind friends all. Ruth, there is one more surprise for you, and then we shall have finished."

She spoke with quivering lips, and led the way upstairs.

Her brother, standing impatiently before the fire, sprang to meet her.

"Yes, George," said Helen. "It is done. Ruth, dear, this is not my brother, but my betrothed. It is your own brother; your own brother George. Do you not remember him now? Yes, Ruth, your brother restored to you indeed, and his innocence established before all the world."

Then said Mr. Baldwin, who leaned upon John Wybrow while he spoke, and spoke very slowly:

"George Warneford," he said, "I have been thinking in the carriage what I should say to you, and could think of nothing; no, nothing that would express my sorrow and my joy."

George Warneford shook hands with him without a word. He could find no

words; his sister was clinging to his neck weeping the tears of joy and thankfulness, and his own heart was overcharged.

"I have sinned greatly," said Mr. Baldwin; "I was too ready to believe evil. I should have known all along that your father's son could not—could never have done that thing."

"Say no more, sir," said George; "let the past sleep; tell me only that you are quite and truly satisfied."

"I cannot let the past be forgotten, George. A great injury has been committed and a great reparation must follow; the reproaches that I have hurled at you in my thoughts for the last eight years have come back upon my own head; nothing can ever make me forget. You, kind friends," said the old man, turning to the professor and his family, who were gathered, not without an instinctive feeling as to artistic grouping, in the doorway, "who have entertained Ruth Warneford as one of yourselves, and have known her story all along, how shall we thank you? To-morrow is Christmas Day, but on the day following I shall proclaim George Warneford's innocence to all the people of the firm, and, in their presence, humbly ask this injured man for pardon."

"No, sir, no. My kind old master, there is nothing to forgive."

"John, my boy"—Mr. Baldwin turned to his nephew—"tell me what I ought to do."

"First ask George to let me marry Ruth," said John, holding out his hand.

"Granted at once," said George; "that is, if Ruth says Yes."

They shook hands, and the audience—the Lemires—clapped their hands and shouted.

"What next should I do, John?" asked Mr. Baldwin, wiping his eye-glasses with his handkerchief.

"The next thing you must do is to give away Helen Elwood on her wedding-day, which must be mine and Ruth's as well; and you must buy her the very handsomest present that you can think of; no curmudgeonly gift will do."

The audience clapped their hands again, approving this. John Wybrow, who was a practical man, then said there had been enough of tears.

"Ay, ay, John. What next?"

This time it was old Ben who stepped to the front and touched his gray old forelock.

"Beg pardon, sir, there's one that ought

to be remembered. Who found out Boston Tom and sat by him night and day, so that he couldn't escape if he wished, and stuck to him? Stand for'ard, Master Rupert. That's the lad, sir. He wants to go to sea; give him a passage out and back in one of your own ships."

Mr. Baldwin shook hands with Rupert, now of a rosy hue.

"You shall have whatever you like to ask for, young gentleman, if I can give it."

Once more a round of applause from the family. By a dexterous movement of the right leg, Rupert gracefully stepped over their heads, and deposited himself in the background.

"And nothing for you, Mr. Croil?"

"Nothing for me, sir," said the old sailor.

"I belong to Miss Helen."

"Anything else, John?" asked Mr. Baldwin, still unsatisfied.

"You ought to give desks in your office to as many of Mr. Lemire's sons as like to accept them, and, my dear uncle, the partnership which you promised to me, and which I threw over with so much bravado in the church——"

"It is yours, my boy, to begin from the new year."

"No, give it to George Warneford, as some reparation for his eight years of unmerited suffering."

"That will not be fair," said George.

But the audience clapped their hands again.

"Both of you, both of you," said Mr. Baldwin. "The firm can take in both. And what more, John?"

"Why, sir," said John, "I find that Madame Lemire would be delighted if we would all stay and take supper here; and I really think that, if the professor would allow such a thing, we might have a little dance downstairs before supper."

Again the audience clapped their hands, and there was a move to the class-room.

The professor took his violin of ceremony.

"Simple quadrille of four," he announced. "Mr. Warneford and Miss Elwood at the head, Mr. Wybrow and Miss Warneford for vis-à-vis."

He struck the floor with his foot and began to play. It was a lame sort of quadrille at first, because two of the performers had tearful eyes, and would rather have sat in a corner. But John Wybrow knew what he was about, and what was best for everybody.

Then they had a waltz, and Rupert

danced with Ruth, while John took Helen.

Then began the dancing of high Art, after this respect to social usage.

"Danse de Foie!" cried the professor. "Pas seul, Mademoiselle Lemire; pas de deux, Mademoiselle Lemire and Monsieur Rupert Lemire."

At eight, Madame Lemire announced that supper was ready, and they all filed in. Needless to tell of the splendours of this wedding feast, only, as they entered the room, an unexpected sight greeted their eyes. Rupert, holding a sword in his hands, was standing on the table, and, as they crowded in, executed a grand dance among the dishes, as difficult and as original as any Indian dance among eggs. And such was the love of the Lemire family for Art, that this spectacle gave them more delight and pride even than the pheasants and cold turkey, with champagne, which followed.

Mr. Baldwin, after supper, asked if he might propose a toast.

"Not the health and happiness of George and Ruth Warneford," he said; "that is deep in all our hearts. I propose that we drink the health of Professor Lemire, who is a good and a kind man, that we wish him all the success that he wishes for himself, and more; and that we thank him and his wife, and his children, one and all, for their faithful love and care of Ruth. Let us promise never to forget the great debt we owe him—a debt so heavy, that no service could pay it off; a debt, my dear friends, which we would not pay off if we could. For in this house Ruth was received with love, and brought up, in God-fearing ways of truth and religion, for you, George Warneford, and for us."

My story is told. You will see now, reader, who has told it. The writer is my wife—my Helen. Twenty years have passed since that day, and we are old married people. Some of those who played their

part in the drama have departed from us: old Ben is gone, and Mr. Baldwin; the professor, who caught a cold from going into the rain in his pumps, is gone too; his wife was not long in following him. The young Lemires, however, have done well. Rupert went out for his voyage, but, once in Melbourne, stopped there, and is there still. He is long since married, but he sends Ruth a present every year. His sister Nettie went on the stage as a danseuse, and after two or three years danced herself into the affections of a young fellow, who only wanted a wife to make him the steadiest and best of men. She took care of all the younger branches, except Charlotte, who lives with Ruth Wybrow, and is a second mother to the children.

And as for me, I am the head of the firm of Batterick and Baldwin, the other partner being John Wybrow. Our chief clerk is Gaspard Lemire. I got the Queen's pardon, which was necessary, Mr. Baldwin said, for my complete restoration to the world; and I had the temporary annoyance of seeing my story told in the papers, and mangled in the telling too. I can never be too grateful for the recovery of my good name; but the thing for which I am most constantly and unceasingly grateful is for the gift of a perfect wife—the most divine gift that was ever vouchsafed to man.

The December Part of ALL THE YEAR ROUND
CONTAINS THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

By DUTTON COOK,

Author of "Young Mr. Nightingale," "Hobson's Choice," &c. &c., entitled

"DOUBLEDAY'S CHILDREN,"

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A NEW SERIES OF PAPERS,

"LEARNING TO COOK WITH THE POOR."

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"The only real improvement on the Kitchener."



THE
PATENT CIRCULAR-FRONT COOKING RANGE.

With Open Chimney for Ventilation, and Fire that may be enlarged
to Roast any size Joint in Front.

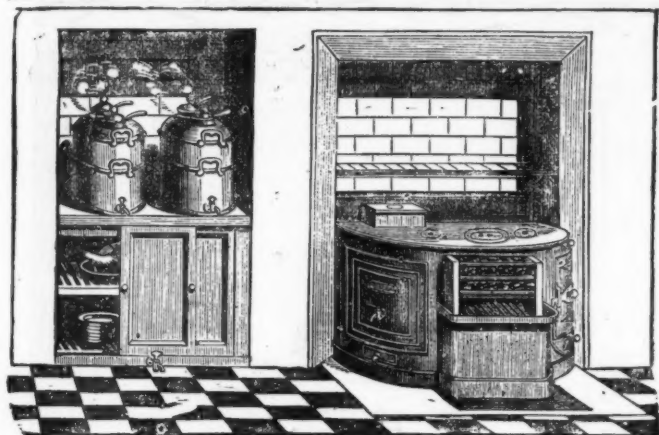
SOLE AGENTS:—
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WHERE IT MAY BE SEEN IN DAILY USE.

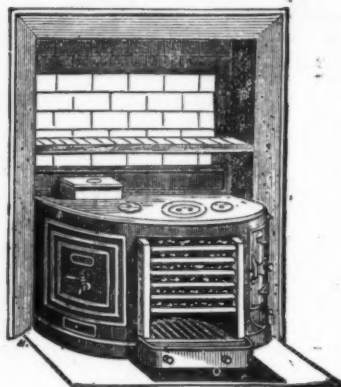
THE PATENT CIRCULAR-FRONT COOKING STOVE,

With Open Chimney, and Roasting Fire that will adapt to roast any size Joint in front of it.



SHOWN WITH ORDINARY FIRE.

In the Patent Circular Range the Fire is angle shaped, and when in use, as above, Baking, Steaming, and Boiling upon the Hot Plate can be thoroughly maintained. By turning the handle the Fire Box is lowered, producing a roasting fire of any required size.



FRONT AS A ROASTING FIRE.

ROASTS BEFORE THE FIRE.

ROASTS OR BAKES IN THE OVEN.

GIVES A LARGE SUPPLY OF HOT WATER.

CARRIES OFF THE HEAT AND SMELL OF COOKING
INTO THE CHIMNEY.

USES VERY LITTLE COAL.

SIFTS THE CINDERS AT ONCE.

IS EASILY MANAGED.

Equally adaptable and economical for the moderate requirements of a small family, or for the largest establishments, public institutions, &c., &c.

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MUSGRAVE'S PATENT SLOW COMBUSTION STOVE,

IMPROVED UNDER A SECOND PATENT,



For Warming and Ventilating Public and Private Buildings of every kind, are now extensively used, and are rapidly increasing in reputation. There is no other plan of heating (except hot water) so free from dust, or which distributes the heat so equally; and it is more economical than any other.

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WITH FIRE BRICK SIDES AND BACKS.



MILNER'S Stoves economise fuel, and at same time throw out a great heat. Fire Brick is the best known material for constructing that part of the Stove which holds the fire. It is an enduring substitute for fuel; and the fact of its retaining heat until it glows like burning coal, makes it a powerful heating auxiliary far superior to Iron.

Made in elegant designs suitable for Drawing and Dining Rooms, Libraries, Bed Rooms, and Cottages.

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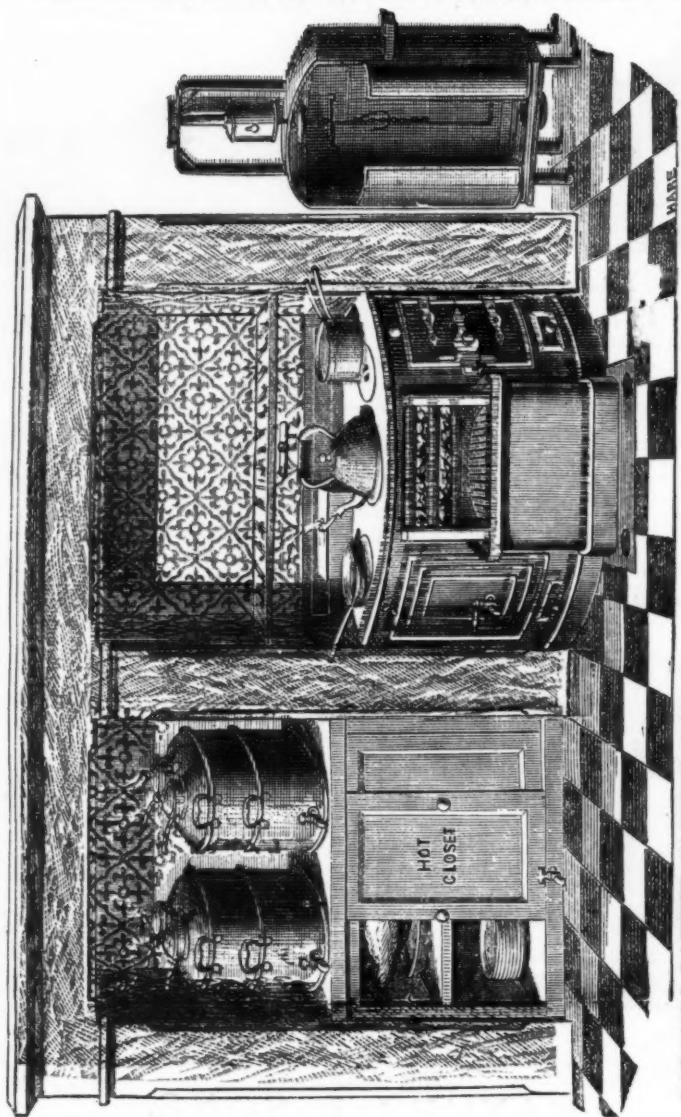
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BARTON'S PATENT COOKING RANGE, with Hot-Closet, Steam Kettles, and Roasting Screens.

"This is the only Range that shows any originality of invention, and that in the right direction."

Shaving a Luxury,
PEARS'S SHAVING
SOAP



TRANSPARENT
SHAVING STICK.

PURE FRAGRANT & DURABLE
Price ONE SHILLING.

80 Years established as the best.
Abundance of lather. No irritation of the
Skin; leaves it smooth, clean, cool, and com-
fortable. Recommended by Mr. ERASMUS
WILSON, F.R.S., and obtained Five Prize
Medals.

A. & F. PEARS, PERFUMERS,
91, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.

*Chemists & Perfumers
sell it*

CAUTION TO PARENTS.

During Childhood, the Skin, owing to its extreme delicacy, is more liable than at any other period of life to be injured by improper Soap. This article is commonly adulterated with most pernicious ingredients; Hence, frequently, the irritability, redness, and unhealthy appearance of the Skin from which many children suffer, in lieu of possessing the beautiful complexion natural to them.

The Public have not the requisite knowledge of the manufacture of Soap to guide them to a proper selection, so a pretty box or perfume alone too frequently outweigh more important considerations. The following facts should be carefully noted. As a rule,

HIGHLY COLOURED SOAPS ARE POISONOUS,

All artificially coloured Soaps contain unnecessary, though sometimes harmless, ingredients, and nearly all Toilet Soaps contain an excess of Soda. Very white Soaps, such as "Curd," generally contain a much larger quantity of Soda than others, owing to the use of Cocoa Nut Oil, which makes a bad and strongly alkaline soap that is very injurious to the skin, besides leaving a roughness and disagreeable odour.

THE PROPRIETORS OF

PEARS'S TRANSPARENT SOAP

Believe their article not the only pure Soap, but one of the *very few* offered to the public; briefly—

IT IS ABSOLUTELY PURE—FREE FROM EXCESS OF ALKALI (Soda)
—CONTAINS NO COLOURING MATTER.

(Its deep brown amber colour is *natural* to it, and acquired by *age* alone.)

YIELDS A PROFUSE CREAMY LATHER OF MARVELLOUS
FRAGRANCE, IS EXCEEDINGLY DURABLE.—

HAS BEEN IN GOOD REPUTE EIGHTY YEARS.

AND OBTAINED PRIZE MEDALS, 1851, 1862, 1867, 1875 AND 1876.

These qualities have induced many eminent Physicians to recommend its use, and numerous certificates of its merits obtained during so long a period might be published if such a course did not resemble empiricism. The Proprietors, however, mention with satisfaction the names of the following gentlemen, who, from a chemical knowledge of the Soap, and a practical acquaintance with its value for the Skin, have given it their recommendation:—

Dr. ODLING, Professor of Chemistry at ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL, London.

Mr. STARTIN, Senior Surgeon to the INSTITUTION FOR TREATMENT OF THE SKIN, Blackfriars, London.

Mr. ERASMUS WILSON, F.R.S., Editor of "THE JOURNAL OF CUTANEOUS MEDICINE."

Dr. TILBURY FOX, PHYSICIAN FOR TREATMENT OF THE SKIN, University College Hospital, London.

Mr. JOHN L. MILTON, Senior Surgeon, ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT OF THE SKIN, Leicester Square, London.

THE SURGEONS of the INSTITUTION FOR TREATMENT OF THE SKIN, Blackfriars, London.

PEARS'S TRANSPARENT SOAP

Is sold by all Chemists and Perfumers, and at the Retail Depot of the Inventors,
91, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.

FOR WASHING.

BALLS, TABLETS, AND SQUARE CAKES, three sizes of each shape, 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. 6d. each.
The 2s. 6d. Tablets and Square Cakes are perfumed with *Osso of Roses*.

The durability is such that a Shilling Tablet is sufficient on an average for a child's bath for two months; hence it is actually *cheaper* in the end than a lower-priced and inferior article. The public, to prevent disappointment, are requested to ask for "PEARS'S TRANSPARENT SOAP," and to see that each packet contains their circular, headed, "VICTORIA VERITATIS," and signed thus—

A & F Pears

MR. ERASMUS WILSON F.R.S.
says—"Pears is a name engraven on the memory of the oldest inhabitant; Pears's Transparent Soap, an article of the nicest and most careful manufacture, and one of the most refreshing and agreeable of balms to the skin."

*.A Sample Tablet, as above, sent, Carriage paid, on receipt of One Shilling in Postage Stamps.

Pure, Fragrant, and Durable—no Artificial Colouring.

Soft and White Hands. Redness, Roughness & Chapping avoided.

A GOOD COMPLEXION.

There is nothing which adds so much to personal attractions as a bright, clear complexion and a soft skin. Without them the handsomest and most regular features are but coldly impressive, whilst with them the plainest become attractive; and yet there is no advantage so easily secured. The regular use of a properly prepared Soap is one of the chief means; but the general public are so little acquainted with the qualities of Toilet Soaps that they are indiscriminate in their selection, and frequently most unconsciously are daily injuring instead of improving one of the greatest of personal charms.

THE EXCELLENT QUALITIES OF

PEARS'S TRANSPARENT SOAP

have induced many eminent Physicians to recommend it in preference to all other soaps for its beneficial effect on the health and beauty of the skin, and

MR. ERASMUS WILSON, F.R.S.,

says, "PEARS is a name engraven on the memory of the 'oldest inhabitant;' and Pears's Transparent Soap, an article of the nicest and most careful manufacture, and one of the most refreshing and agreeable of balms to the skin."

It is absolutely pure, free from excess of alkali (soda), contains no colouring matter, is delightfully perfumed, exceedingly durable, has been in good repute eighty years, and obtained Prize Medals 1851, 1862, 1867, 1875, and 1876.

To those whose skin is generally irritable or readily affected by the weather, PEAR'S TRANSPARENT SOAP is invaluable, as, on account of its emollient and non-irritant character, all redness, roughness, and chapping are avoided, and a clear healthy appearance and a soft velvety condition obtained, accompanied by a delicate and beautiful complexion. Its agreeable and lasting perfume, beautiful appearance, and soothing properties, commend it as the greatest luxury and most elegant adjunct to the Toilet.

FOR WASHING.

BALLS, TABLETS and SQUARE CAKES, three sizes of each shape, 1s., 1s. 6d., and 2s. 6d. each, according to size.

The 2s. 6d. Tablet and Square Cake are perfumed with Otto of Roses.

Sold by Chemists and Perfumers throughout the World,
and by the Inventors,

A. & F. PEAR'S,

(ESTABLISHED 1789.)

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MANUFACTORY, ISLEWORTH, W.

PARTICULARLY RECOMMENDED FOR INFANTS.

May be used to the thinness of a Wafer—no Waste.

Pure, Fragrant, and Durable—no Artificial Colouring.



PEARS'S TRANSPARENT SOAP

PREVENTS REDNESS, ROUGHNESS & CHAPPING.

• PURE • FRAGRANT & DURABLE

NO WASTE - NO ARTIFICIAL COLORING.

Mr. Erasmus Wilson F.R.S.

says;

*"the most agreeable & refreshing
of balms for the skin*

*"is
" Pear's's Transparent Soap*

SOLD BY

EVERY CHEMIST AND PERFUMER.

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PROVIDENT LIFE OFFICE.

FOUNDED 1806.

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EDINBURGH,
75, George Street.

DUBLIN,
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HEAD OFFICE:



50, REGENT STREET,
LONDON.

EXISTING ASSURANCES.....	£5,526,706.
INVESTED FUNDS	£1,878,819.
CLAIMS PAID	£5,602,592.
ANNUAL INCOME.....	£244,230.

FOR FURTHER PARTICULARS SEE BACK.

THE PROVIDENT LIFE OFFICE

Was founded in the year 1806, and has during 70 years pursued an uninterrupted career of prosperity. At the present time it has Invested Funds, £1,878,819, and an Annual Income of £244,230.

PROFITS.

The next Division will take place in May, 1878. Policies effected before the 1st January, 1878, will be entitled to share in this Division.

In the *PROVIDENT*, a Bonus immediately it is declared becomes absolute property. Bonuses to the amount of £2,042,155 have already been declared.

EXAMPLES OF BONUSSES UPON POLICIES STILL IN EXISTENCE.

No. of Policy.	Date of Policy.	Sum Assured.	Policy increased by Bonuses to			Percentage of Bonus to Sum Assured.
3,924	1821	5,000	£	s.	d.	140 per cent.
6,616	1828	4,000	12,000	7	0	121 "
3,217	1819	500	8,855	17	0	114 "
			1,071	0	4	

EXAMPLES OF POLICIES UPON WHICH NO PREMIUMS ARE PAYABLE,

The yearly payments having been extinguished by the application of part of the Bonus to that purpose:—

No. of Policy.	Date of Policy.	Sum Assured.	Premium Payable.	Sum now Payable.		
8,595	1834	3,000	Nil.	£	s.	d.
6,004	1826	1,000	"	4,346	0	0
9,195	1836	500	"	1,443	8	9
				661	0	0

NOTE.—The foregoing Policies will continue to be increased annually till death.

Surrender Values.—Surrender Values are granted upon Policies any time after the payment of one year's premium.

Loans on Policies.—Loans are advanced by the Office, upon the deposit of a PROVIDENT POLICY, when the Surrender Value amounts to £10.

Foreign Residence.—Persons insured by this Office may reside in any part of the World, distant more than 33 degrees from the Equator, and in Australia, New Zealand, and Cape Colony, *without License or extra Premium.*

Full Information given on application to THE SECRETARY, 50, REGENT STREET, LONDON, W.

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IMPORTANT TO ALL.

As a means of keeping the system clear, and thus taking away the groundwork of Malarious Diseases and all Liver Complaints,

ENO'S FRUIT SALT

Is particularly valuable. No Traveller should leave home without a supply; for by its use the most dangerous forms of Fever, Gouty, Rheumatic, and other Blood Poisons, very frequently causing Apoplexy, Heart Disease, and sudden death, &c., are prevented and cured. It is, in truth, a FAMILY MEDICINE CHEST in the simplest yet most potent form.

The FRUIT SALT acts as simply yet just as powerfully on the animal system, as sunshine does on the vegetable world; it has a natural action on the organs of digestion, absorption, circulation, respiration, secretion, and excretion, and removes all impurities, thus preserving and restoring health.

Also as a Refreshing, Cooling, and Invigorating Beverage, use

ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

(PREPARED FROM SOUND RIPE FRUIT.)

Biliousness, Sick Headache, Skin Eruptions, Impure Blood, Pimples on the Face, Giddiness, Feverishness, Mental Depression, Want of Appetite, Sourness of the Stomach, Constipation, Vomiting, Thirst, &c., and to remove the effects of Errors of Eating and Drinking.

A Gentleman states:—In cases of bilious headaches, followed by severe attacks of fever, ENO'S FRUIT SALT has acted like a charm when all other treatments have failed. The day is not far distant when the neglect of its use in all fevers and diseases resulting from poisoned blood will be considered as criminal. See "Stomach and its Trials," 10th Edition, post free for 14 stamps.

Messrs. Gibson & Son, Chemists, of Hexham, writing for a further supply of the Fruit Salt, say:—"Since we introduced your FRUIT SALT in Hexham, a few months ago, we have sold above a Thousand Bottles, and it gives general satisfaction, as customers who get it almost always recommend it to their friends. We have had numerous instances of its efficacy in the cure of bilious headaches and stomach complaints. It has had a greater sale than any other proprietary medicine that we know of."

If its great value in keeping the body in health were universally known, no family would be without it. Price 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d. Prepared only by

J. C. ENO, Newcastle-on-Tyne,

May be had through any Chemist, as all Wholesale Houses keep it in stock.

TRADE

ELECTRICITY IS LIFE

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PULVERMACHER'S IMPROVED PATENT GALVANIC CHAIN BANDS, BELTS, & BATTERIES

A self-applicable curative, perfectly harmless, and vastly superior to other remedies.

Though externally applied it has an internal action, physiologically, physically, and chemically upon the system, assisting nature to re-establish the normal balance of health and vigour, as witness the remarkable cures daily effected in cases of RHEUMATISM, NEURALGIA, GOUT, DEAFNESS, HEAD AND TOOTH ACHE, PARALYSIS, NERVOUS DEBILITY, and Functional Derangements, &c., by means of PULVERMACHER'S GALVANIC APPLIANCES, when all other remedies have failed.

A few of the daily increasing number of testimonials communicated by grateful patients are reproduced in the pamphlet "Galvanism, Nature's Chief Restorer of Impaired Vital Energy," post free on application to

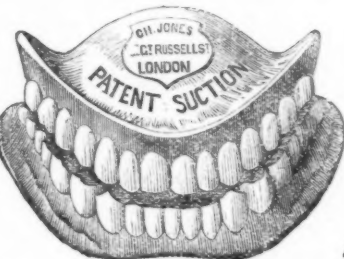
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Mr. G. H. JONES,
57, GREAT RUSSELL STREET,
Has obtained HER MAJESTY'S
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Artificial Teeth by

Pamphlet gratis and post free, which explains his improved system of adapting Teeth



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Surgeon Dentist,
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ROYAL LETTERS PATENT
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A Handy Guide to Domestic Medicine. Every Household should possess a Copy.

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All Invalids should read the Chapter on the Functions of Digestion, showing by what process food is converted into blood—How blood sustains the whole system—How nervous power influences all the bodily organs to perform their allotted functions—Principles of life and death unfolded—Dying seldom accompanied with pain—Mental vision amplified prior to the death of the body—Immortality of the intelligent principle.

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A clergyman, writing to Dr. Rooke, under date July 5th, 1874, speaking of the "ANTI-LANCET," says: "Of its style and matter I can judge, for I have been an author on other themes for thirty years. None but a master-mind among men could have conceived or written your Introduction. It is the most perfect delineation I ever read of the human frame, and the links between the material fabric and the spiritual union of body and soul."

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DR. ROOKE, Scarborough, author of the "Anti-Lancet," says:—

"I have repeatedly observed how very rapidly and
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"of the Chest in cases of Pulmonary Consumption;

"and I can, with the greatest confidence, recom-
"mend it as a most valuable adjunct to an other-
"wise strengthening treatment for this disease."

This medicine, which is free from opium and squills, not only allays the local irritation, but improves digestion and strengthens the constitution. Hence it is used with the most signal success in

ASTHMA,
BRONCHITIS,

CONSUMPTION,
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INFLUENZA,
QUINCY,

CONSUMPTIVE NIGHT SWEATS,
And all affections of the Throat and Chest.

Sold in Bottles, at 1s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s. each, by all respectable Chemists, and wholesale by JAMES M. CROSBY, Chemist, Scarborough, England.

* * Invalids should read Crosby's Prize Treatise on "DISEASES OF THE LUNGS AND AIR-VESSELS," a copy of which can be had *GRATIS* of all Chemists.

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